



THE HISTORY OF THE
LITTLE SNIPPETS OF

TEXAS MADMAN
MY LIFE AND

TRAVELS WILL BE IN THIS WRITTEN WORK, JUST DON'T EXPECT AN ADVENTURE NOVEL, I'M NO ERNEST HEMINGWAY OR JACK LONDON. IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME THAT A PERSON'S PERSONAL STORY BE RECORDED FOR PEOPLE TO READ BECAUSE ALL PEOPLE LIVE HISTORY EVERY DAY OF THEIR LIVES. WHAT HISTORY THEY LIVE ADDS TO THE AMERICAN CULTURE AND HELPS OUR WAY OF LIFE EVOLVE, SOME MAKE MAJOR IMPACTS ALTHOUGH THOSE FOLKS NEVER REALIZE IT. AND IT'S STILL IMPORTANT TO RECORD AND RECOGNIZE IT. I'M NOT LOOKING FOR FAME OR GLORY, MY DESIRE IS TO RECORD THE CULTURAL HISTORY I'VE WITNESSED, AND THOUGH I RELATE MY LIFE, I AM LOOKING TO EDUCATE YOU ABOUT THE WONDERFUL CULTURE OF THE HOBO FAMILY THAT I WAS BORN INTO. HOPEFULLY THIS TELLING WILL OFFER AN EDUCATION INTO THIS LIFE, AND GIVE YOU A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF MY FAMILY, AND LESS DEPENDENCE UPON LIES, INNUENDO, AND PREJUDICE,

TIME AND MY GOD WILL BE MY JUDGE!

TO TELL YOU ABOUT ME I HAVE TO TELL YOU ABOUT MY MOTHER, MOM WAS BORN IN 1918 TO A LADY WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY END UP TAKING CARE OF 21 CHILDREN, MOST OF THEM ORPHANS. IN 1931 MY MOTHER WAS CALLED IN FRONT OF HER MOTHER ALONG WITH 10 OTHER OLDER CHILDREN AND TOLD " YOU MUST GO FEND FOR YOURSELF, I CANNOT AFFORD TO FEED YOU ANYMORE." TODAY THIS MIGHT BE CONSIDERED CHILD ABUSE AND ABANDONMENT, BUT DURING THOSE DAYS EARLY IN THE 20TH CENTURY IT WAS A FACT OF LIFE, AN ECONOMIC REFLEX TO MOST SOCIAL ISSUES. SO LIKE A CHILD OF THAT ERA MY MOTHER LEFT HOME AND STARTED HITCHHIKING INTO TEMPLE TEXAS WHERE SHE GOT A JOB AS A WAITRESS. EVENTUALLY SHE STARTED RIDING FREIGHT TRAINS AND

RODE OUT TO FT. WORTH WHERE SHE LEARNED THE JOB OF NURSING, AND CONTINUED TO RIDE FREIGHT TRAINS, RANGING OUT OF TEXAS INTO OKLAHOMA AND FURTHER NORTH INTO OTHER STATES. AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF RIDING FREIGHT TRAINS MY MOTHER STARTED TRAVELING WITH THE MAN WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME MY BIOLOGICAL FATHER, AN IMMIGRANT FROM SCOTLAND. THEY TRAVELED FREIGHT TRAINS AND ENJOYED EACH OTHERS COMPANY, AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF RIDING AND WORKING THEY WOULD FREQUENTLY FIND THEMSELVES WINTERING IN THE NORTH. MY MOTHER MISSED HER HOME STATE OF TEXAS, AND DURING THE LATE SUMMER OF 1958 MY MOTHER STARTED FEELING SOME PAINS IN HER ABDOMEN, AFTER SEEING A DOCTOR FOUND SHE WAS "KNOCKED UP" WITH ME. MY MOTHER DIDN'T WANT TO SPEND ANOTHER WINTER IN THE COLD AND SNOWY NORTH OF INDIANAPOLIS INDIANA SO SHE AND MY FATHER JUMPED A PASSING PENNSYLVANIA R.R. FREIGHT TRAIN INTENDING TO HEAD SOUTH FOR THE WINTER.

EXCEPT THE TRAIN ONLY WENT 68 MILES WEST TO THE TOWN OF BRAZIL INDIANA, SO THE TWO OF THEM RENTED WHAT WAS CALLED A RAILROAD APARTMENT BECAUSE IT SITS NEXT TO AN ACTIVE RAILROAD MAINLINE, AND THEY GOT JOBS, MOTHER WORKING AS A WAITRESS IN THE BLUEBONNET CAFE, A RESTAURANT THAT IS STILL THERE TODAY. MY FATHER GOT A DIESEL MECHANIC JOB AT A LOCAL TRUCK GARAGE, AND THEY LIVED IN BRAZIL FOR THE WINTER, ON JANUARY 5TH OF 1959 THEY HEARD LOUD KNOCKING AT THEIR DOOR AND FOUND IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES WAITING TO TAKE MY FATHER BACK TO SCOTLAND. MY FATHER WAS AN ILLEGAL ALIEN IN THE US FOR MANY YEARS, THESE AUTHORITIES HAULED MY FATHER FIRST TO INDIANAPOLIS, THEN TO NEW YORK CITY, AND FINALLY TO EDINBURGH SCOTLAND, MY FATHER ENDED UP LIVING IN SCOTLAND FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE, BEING BURIED IN HIS HOMETOWN OF DUNBLANE.

ON JANUARY 19TH OF 1959, COLD AND RAINY, MY MOTHER SAID SHE WAS LAYING ON HER BACK IN THE DELIVERY ROOM OF THE CLAY COUNTY HOSPITAL AND I CAME OUT HEAD FIRST KICKING AND

SCREAMING, AND SHE SAID THAT SHE KNEW EXACTLY WHAT I WAS SAYING. **"IT'S TOO COLD OUT HERE, PUT ME BACK, PUT ME BACK!"**, SO 2 SPRINGS LATER, IN 1961, MY MOTHER WENT TO THE BLUEBONNET CAFE, QUIT HER JOB, TOOK THE LAST OF HER PAY, HER TIPS, CLOSED OUT HER BANK ACCOUNT, CAME HOME AND PACKED UP CLOTHES, FOOD, AND ME, AND HEADED DOWN TO THE LOCAL PENNSYLVANIA R.R. FREIGHT YARD WHERE WE WAITED FOR A WESTBOUND TRAIN.

WE GOT ON ONE 3-4 HOURS LATER WHICH TOOK US TO VINCENNES AND TERREHAUTE INDIANA, EFFINGHAM AND BLOOMINGTON, AND FINALLY EAST ST. LOUIS ILLINOIS WHERE SHE GOT US OFF THE TRAIN AND GOT US ON A BUS FIRST TO ST. LOUIS, AND THEN TO ST. CHARLES. THERE SHE BOARDED US ON A SUCCESSION OF MISSOURI KANSAS TEXAS FREIGHT TRAINS WHICH TOOK US THROUGH COLUMBIA, JEFFERSON CITY, BOONEVILLE, AND SEDALIA MISSOURI. FT. SCOTT, PARSONS, AND OLATHE KANSAS. VINITA, MUSKOGEE, AND WAGONEER OKLAHOMA, DENISON, FT. WORTH, WACO, AND TEMPLE TEXAS, THERE SHE GOT US OFF THE MISSOURI KANSAS TEXAS AND TOOK US OVER TO THE GULF COLORADO & SANTA FE. TO RIDE THE "PUDDLE JUMPER" BACK TO HER HOMETOWN OF LAMPASSAS TEXAS, SHE MOVED US INTO A HOME BUILT OUT OF A "GANDY DANCER CAMP CAR" THAT SAT 50 FEET AWAY FROM THE MAINLINE OF THE GULF COLORADO & SANTA FE. I GREW UP WITH HOBOES LIVING IN THE SCRUB WOODS BEHIND THE HOUSE, FRIENDS OF MY MOTHER THAT SHE KNEW FROM HER DAYS ON THE ROAD. OUR HOUSE SAT ALONG THE BANKS OF A BRANCH OF THE LAMPASSAS RIVER WHICH WE DREW WATER FROM FOR OUR DAILY LIVES, IT CAME IN HANDY IN THE SUMMER IN THIS PART OF TEXAS BECAUSE THE TEMPERATURES COULD GET UP TO 115* IN THE SHADE. SO SWIMMING IN THE WATER COULD BE A RELIEF IN THE HEAT OF THE AFTERNOON, MANY TIMES I CAN REMEMBER RIDING MY BIKE HOME FROM SCHOOL IN BELTON 2 MILES AWAY. STOPPING TO COLLECT TV AND RADIO TUBES IN TRASH PILES, AND TESTING THEM AT THE HARDWARE STORE IN BELTON, THEN TAKING THEM HOME SO WE COULD REPAIR RADIOS AND TV'S THAT WE WOULD SELL IN LAMPASSAS, OR TEMPLE.

FRIENDS I HAD AT SCHOOL WOULD FOLLOW ME TO MY HOUSE BECAUSE "THE HOBO KID" HAD A STREAM THEY COULD SWIM IN. WE ALSO HAD AN OUTHOUSE WHICH WOULD CHANGE LOCATIONS IN OUR YARD, MOM HAD A DEAL WORKED OUT WITH THE HOBOS LIVING IN THE WOODS OUT BACK. THEY COULD USE IT FOR THE PURPOSE IT WAS BUILT AND TO DUMP THEIR FOOD GARBAGE IN, WHEN IT GOT CLOSE TO FULL THEY WOULD DIG A NEW "HONEY HOLE". THEN PICK UP THE OUTHOUSE AND MOVE IT OVER THE NEW " HONEY HOLE", GO BACK AND FILL THE OLD HOLE, AND PLANT SOME TREES TO MARK THE LOCATION SO THAT IF YOU'RE WALKING IN THE DARK YOU DON'T STEP INTO SOMETHING THAT WILL HAVE YOU CHEST DEEP IN A PIT THAT'S WET, GREASY, AND NASTY SMELLING. THE HOBOS USUALLY PLANTED APPLE TREES, BUT ALSO PLANTED PEACH AND PLUM TREES WHICH GREW WITH UNFETTERED ABANDON, THE KIDS WHO WERE SWIMMING IN THE CREEK WOULD EAT THE FRUIT AND TELL ME "YOU'RE SO LUCKY, YOU HAVE ALL THIS SWEET FRUIT TO EAT", AND I WOULD THINK "IF YOU ONLY KNEW WHAT WAS FERTILIZING THOSE TREES YOU WOULDN'T BE EATING THAT FRUIT!"

LATE AT NIGHT I WOULD BE IN MY BED LISTENING FOR THE MIDNIGHT MAIL, A PIGGYBACK TRAIN ON THE GULF COLORADO & SANTA FE THAT WOULD RUN THROUGH OUR TOWN EAST TO WEST EXACTLY AT 12:00 MIDNIGHT. SO EXACT WAS THIS TRAIN THAT YOU COULD SET YOUR WATCH BY IT, AND AT EXACTLY 12:00 NOON IT WOULD RUN WEST TO EAST. IT WAS THIS EXPERIENCE IN MY LIFE THAT I LEARNED TO ENJOY SIMPLE THINGS, LIKE WATCHING A SUNSET, MANY OF THE SUNSETS AROUND THE AREA WITH LINGERING BEAUTIFUL COLORS, OR SITTING QUIETLY WATCHING A HUMMINGBIRD FLYING FROM FLOWER TO FLOWER.

COLLECTING TV AND RADIO TUBES BROUGHT ABOUT LEARNING A TRADE THAT WOULD COME IN HANDY FOR ME AFTER "HITTING THE ROAD" BECAUSE I COULD STOP OFF IN ANY TOWN AND FIND EMPLOYMENT. ALTHOUGH INNOVATIVE FOR ITS TIME VACUUM TUBES WOULD GIVE WAY TO PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARDS AND I NEVER LEARNED TO REPAIR THEM MUCH TO MY DETRIMENT. I REMEMBER GOING TO THE TV AND SWITCHING IT ON TO HEAR A STEADY HUM AS

THE AMPLIFIER AND ITS TUBES WARMED UP, WHEN THAT HUM SILENCED 3 DOTS APPEARED ON THE MAIN SCREEN FOR 3-4 SECONDS. THOSE SPLIT APART AND THE PICTURE APPEARED, OUT OF FOCUS AND ADJUSTMENT, SO A PERSON HAD TO TWIST THE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL HOLD. WHEN THAT ADJUSTMENT WAS ACCOMPLISHED THE BRIGHTNESS AND CONTRAST HAD TO BE ADJUSTED, AND FINALLY REACH TO THE BACK OF THE TV AND ADJUST THE FOCUS. AND WE ONLY HAD 3 STATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM, CBS, ABC, AND NBC, QUITE A STEP BACK FROM CABLE OR DIRECT TV.

PLUS WHEN YOU WANTED TO CHANGE CHANNELS YOU ACTUALLY HAD TO GET UP AND TWIST THE CHANNEL KNOB. WHAT A LUXURY NOW HAVING DIGITAL TV AND A REMOTE, PLUS I NEVER SAW COLOR TV UNTIL WELL AFTER I HAD BEEN ON THE ROAD FOR A FEW YEARS. EVERYTHING I WATCHED AS A KID WAS IN BLACK & WHITE AND THAT INCLUDES SEEING NEIL ARMSTRONG JUMP DOWN TO THE SURFACE OF THE MOON AND UTTER HIS FAMOUS WORDS! ONE GOOD THING ABOUT THESE OLD STYLE TV'S IS THAT IN THE WINTER YOU CAN HEAT UP A ROOM RAPIDLY, AND IT WOULD STAY WARM UNTIL THE TV COOLED DOWN!

MY PERSONAL ENJOYMENT HAS BEEN JUST SITTING AND WATCHING FREIGHT TRAINS, WATCHING THE DIFFERENT CARS CHANGE OVER THE YEARS. DIFFERENT RAILROAD EMBLEMS, AND THE DIFFERENT HOBO MONIKERS, SOME MAY SAY THAT I'M INTO GRAFFITI (WHICH MAY BE TRUE) BUT I'M ALSO WATCHING TO SEE THE CONTINUATION OF THE HOBO FAMILY THAT I GREW UP IN. AND I'VE ENJOYED MEETING THE DIFFERENT YOUNG HOBOES, AND LISTENING TO THEIR MANY TRAVELING TALES. IT WAS TALES LIKE THIS THAT I LISTENED TO AS A CHILD THAT THE OLD HOBOES WOULD TELL AS THEY SAT AROUND THE CAMPFIRE EITHER IN THEIR JUNGLE, OR OUT BACK OF OUR HOUSE. THE TALES THAT WERE TOLD INCISED ME TO JUMP TRAINS, AND AT AGE 13 I HIT THE ROAD, NOW LOOKING BACK NOW IN MY 60'S IT WOULD TAKE ME SEVERAL DAYS OR WEEKS TO TELL ALL THE STORIES OF WHAT I'VE EXPERIENCED WHILE TRAVELING THROUGH THIS ROUGH BUT WONDERFUL LIFE.

DURING MY CHILDHOOD I ALSO WORKED WITH A MAN IN TOWN NAMED ROBERT TANNER, AN OLDER BLACK MAN (BACK THEN THEY REFERRED TO THEMSELVES AS BLACK, NOT AFRICAN AMERICAN) WHO MADE HOMEMADE CHARCOAL, AND I HELPED HIM IN THE MAKING. WHICH COMPRISED OF THE BURNING OF CEDAR INTO CINDERS, AFTER WHICH THESE WERE GROUND INTO A POWDER, MIXED WITH SAWDUST, AND WATER AND BLENDED INTO A THICK SLURRY. THEN THE SLURRY WAS FOLDED INTO A 3-FOOT-LONG, 5 FT. WIDE, 1&1/2 INCH DEEP CAKE PAN, PUT ON SHELF RACKS AND ROLLED INTO AN OVEN TO BE BAKED. WHEN THE CHARCOAL SLABS WERE BAKED HARD THEY WERE ROLLED OUT, HAD A LID SLID OVER THE TOP, AND FLIPPED OVER, THE PANS GETTING TAPPED SO THE CHARCOAL SLABS CAME OUT, MOSTLY WHOLE. THEN A BURLAP QUILT COVERED THE SLAB AND WAS TAPPED WITH A 4 POUND HAMMER TO BREAK IT INTO PIECES THE SIZE OF 3 FISTED FINGERS. THIS WAS TRANSFERRED INTO 50 POUND BURLAP BAGS, AND AFTER A DAY OF DOING THIS MR. TANNER AND I CAME OUT LOOKING JUST AS BLACK AS THE CHARCOAL WE WERE MAKING. AFTER WHICH I WOULD GO INTO LAMPASSAS, AND SOMETIMES TEMPLE TO SELL MULTIPLE BURLAP BAGS OF CHARCOAL ON THE WEEKENDS MAKING AROUND \$150.00, BIG MONEY BACK IN THE 1970'S. I SAY BIG MONEY BECAUSE THIS WAS THE DAYS OF PENNY CANDY, AND \$.40 A GALLON GAS, FOLKS I KNEW COULD DRIVE FROM TEMPLE TO SAN ANTONIO AND BACK ON \$10.00. OTHER TIMES I WOULD RIDE TO TEMPLE IN AN OLD DODGE TRUCK WITH MAMA WHICH WAS OVERLOADED WITH PHILCO TV'S AND RCA RADIOS THAT HAD BEEN REPAIRED WITH RECYCLED VACUUM TUBES I HAD COLLECTED OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS. BETWEEN MOM AND I WE'D SELL THE ENTIRE LOAD AS WELL AS DO ON-SITE TV AND RADIO REPAIR WHICH WOULD HELP TO PAY OUR BILLS.

I NEVER KNEW THAT WE WERE LIVING OUT OF DATE, BY THAT I MEAN OUR DISHES WERE HANDCRAFTED OUT OF DISCARDED HAM AND MACKEREL CANS. OUR MUGS WERE CANS WRAPPED WITH WIRE FASHIONED INTO HANDLES, MOM TAUGHT ME TO STITCH AND SEW RIPS IN OUR CLOTHING, PATCHING OVER HOLES. EXTENDING THE LIFE OF THE ITEM BEING REPAIRED, MOM HAD AN EXCESS OF DENIM FROM HOBO'S DISCARDING OLD BLUE JEANS, AND IT WAS AT THIS

TIME I LEARNED THE ART OF MAKING SHIRTS AND JACKETS USING THE DENIM. I SEWED QUILTS WHICH WOULD KEEP US WARM IN THE CHILLY WINTER MONTHS, AND ONE TIME I MADE MY OWN BACKPACK USING DENIM AND MY ABILITY TO SEW. THIS WAS ONE OF THE WAYS I WOULD MAKE EXTRA MONEY WHILE TRAVELING. IT WOULD COME IN HANDY FOR ME DURING THE YEARS I RODE THE RAILS, MANY HAVE SEEN THE ITEMS I'VE MADE, MUCH OF IT IS HANGING IN THE NATIONAL HOBO MUSEUM LOCATED IN BRITT IOWA.

THIS BRINGS ME TO A POINT WHERE I NEED TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION THAT ALL HOBO'S HAVE IN THEIR LIVES, IN THE LATE 1800'S SEVERAL HOBO'S FOUND THEMSELVES "SIDETRACKED" ON THE BANKS OF THE OHIO RIVER. THEY FOUND THEY ALL HAD ONE THING IN COMMON, EACH HOBO HAD BEEN THROWN OFF MANY RAILROADS, AND OUT OF TOWNS BECAUSE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC REASONS FUELED BY SUSPICION, LIES, AND PREJUDICE. EACH HOBO KNEW THAT THERE NEEDED TO BE A CHANGE IN THIS SITUATION, PUBLIC AND LEGAL REPRESENTATION NEEDED TO COME ABOUT TO HELP CHANGE THEIR IMAGE.

NOTICING THAT IF A PERSON WAS A MEMBER OF A UNION THEN THE HARASSMENT THEY EXPERIENCED BY THE PUBLIC AND POLICE AGENCIES WOULD BE NEGATED. BECAUSE UNIONS WERE RESPECTED AND HAD A PROFESSIONAL VIEW IN THE PUBLIC EYE THESE ENTERPRISING HOBO'S WROTE UP ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION FOR A UNION THAT ANY HOBO COULD JOIN. SEEING THAT THERE WERE 63 HOBO'S PRESENT AT THIS GATHERING THEY DECIDED TO NAME THIS NEW UNION TOURIST UNION #63. TO HAVE SOME LEGITIMACY THESE ENTERPRISING HOBO'S HELD AN OFFICIAL LOCATION FOR THE UNION IN CINCINNATI OHIO IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF QUEENSGATE. THE LOCATION OF WHICH WAS THE YARDS OF THE B&O AND N&W RAILROADS, TO MAKE THEMSELVES MORE LEGITIMATE THEY ENLISTED THE HELP OF SEVERAL LOCAL AND NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS. AND ANNUALLY HELD A NATIONAL HOBO CONVENTION, PUBLICISED THIS AIDED IN A BETTER PUBLIC IMAGE OF THIS TRAVELLING NATION, EVERY YEAR TOURIST UNION #63 HELD A

CONVENTION IN A DIFFERENT CITY TO REPRESENT THE MULTICULTURAL, AND NATIONWIDE MEMBERSHIP.

TO RENEW OLD TIES, ENLIST NEW MEMBERS, AND GIVE THE GENERAL PUBLIC A MORE CONCISE IMAGE OF HOBO'S NATIONWIDE, IN 1887 THE UNION HELD ITS CONVENTION ON THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IN ST. LOUIS ON PROPERTY THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME THE GATEWAY ARCH NATIONAL PARK. AT THIS CONVENTION THEY DECIDED UPON CHICAGO AS THE LOCATION OF THEIR NEXT CONVENTION AND FOR 13 YEARS TOURIST UNION #63 HELD ITS ANNUAL CONVENTION IN CHICAGO IN THE HOTEL ALDEN ON MARKET ST. NEXT TO WHAT WAS REFERRED TO AS THE SLAVE MARKETS! SO APTLY NAMED BECAUSE MANY OF THE EMPLOYERS WOULD WORK THE PEOPLE WHO DESIRED TO BE EMPLOYED, EVEN FOR A DAY OR A FEW HOURS, AT THESE EMPLOYMENT OFFICES. AND MANY PEOPLE WOULD EXPERIENCE SLAVE LABOR CONDITIONS WHICH HOBO'S REVILED AND RESISTED, THESE CONDITIONS WERE WHAT SPARKED THE LABOR RIOTS THAT PERSIST TODAY!

IN THE YEAR 1900 THE SMALL TOWN OF BRITT IOWA WANTED TO SHOW THAT THEIR TOWN COULD HOLD A PUBLIC EVENT AS WELL PUBLICIZED AS THE REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTIONS. 2 OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF BRITT INVITED THE GRAND HEADPIPE OF THE UNION TO BRITT AND INVITED HIM TO BRING THE CONVENTION TO THE TOWN. THE GRAND HEADPIPE RODE THE MILWAUKEE ROAD TO BRITT TO INSPECT THE GROUNDS FOR THE EVENTUAL MOVEMENT OF THE CONVENTION. THE TOWN HAD TO BE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE A LARGE CONTINGENT OF TRAVELERS, AND THIS WAS VERY EVIDENT WHEN IN THE YEAR 1932 A TOTAL OF 1800 HOBO'S CONVERGED ON THE LITTLE TOWN OF BRITT IOWA.

BRITT HAS SINCE BEEN THE LOCATION OF THIS ANNUAL EVENT, THE TOWN HAS A CITY PARK THAT IS USED 1 WEEK OUT OF EVERY YEAR TO BE THE CONVENTION GROUNDS. BRITT IS ALSO THE HOME OF

THE NATIONAL HOBO CEMETERY, THE NATIONAL HOBO MUSEUM, IT HOLDS A PARADE IN WHICH THE HONORED GUESTS ARE THE HOBO'S. AND HOLDS THE ANNUAL ELECTION OF THE NEWEST KING, QUEEN, CROWN PRINCE, CROWN PRINCESS, AND GRAND HEADPIPE, AS WELL AS THE MANY DUBBINGS OF GRAND DUKES, GRAND DUTCHESSES, GREAT GRAND DUKES, AND GREAT GRAND DUTCHESSES. THIS IS THE ONLY ELECTED ROYALTY IN THE UNITED STATES, AND THESE ROYAL PERSONS MIGHT END UP AT YOUR FRONT DOOR OFFERING TO MOW YOUR LAWN, OR SHOVEL SNOW FROM YOUR SIDEWALK. DON'T SAY IT WON'T HAPPEN - IT VERY WELL COULD!

BUT ON THIS POINT I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THIS, I PERSONALLY DON'T BELIEVE IN SOMEONE BEING CROWNED KING OR QUEEN OF THE HOBO'S, EACH PERSON HAS THEIR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN LIFE AND ON THE ROAD, IT'S WHAT MAKES EACH PERSON UNIQUE AS WELL AS THEIR RESPECTIVE STORIES. IN ELECTING SOMEONE KING OR QUEEN IT'S TANTAMOUNT TO STATING THAT THE ELECTED PERSONS LIFE AND EXPERIENCES ARE SUPERIOR TO ANYONE ELSE. THERE'S NO WAY THAT I COULD DO ANYTHING LIKE THIS, I ACCEPT THE NOMINATION OF GRAND DUKE OF THE HOBO'S BECAUSE IT WAS DUBBED UPON ME BY AN OLD HOBO FROM THE STEAM ERA. BUT TO COMPETE AND ACCEPT BEING ELECTED AS KING OF THE HOBO'S IS ME QUALIFYING THAT MY LIFE AND EXPERIENCES ARE SUPERIOR TO ANYONE ELSE. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH!, I FEEL THAT EACH MAN AND WOMAN WHO HAS TAKEN UP THIS LIFE AND LIFESTYLE ARE (IN EFFECT) KINGS AND QUEENS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT! WHY TRY TO PIT ONE HOBO AGAINST ANOTHER, IT'S LIKE PLAYING THE CHILDHOOD GAME KING OF THE MOUNTAIN, OR RECITING THE LINES OF THE CHILDHOOD SONG MY DAD'S BETTER THAN YOUR DAD, HOW CHILDISH!

BUT BACK THE RELATING OF MY EXPERIENCES, ALTHOUGH WE HAD ELECTRICITY TO OPERATE OUR TV AND RADIO WE USED KEROSENE

LAMPS AND LANTERNS TO SEE BY, PROBABLY ONE OF THE REASONS MY EYES ARE SO BAD NOW, AND YOU THINK TO HAVE YOUR COMPUTERIZED THERMOSTAT TO ENGAGE THE GAS HEATER, BUT I WOULD CUT AND COLLECT CEDAR AND MESQUITE (OFTEN CALLED "POOR MAN'S COAL") TO THROW IN OUR POTBELLY STOVE. THE ELECTRICITY WE FINALLY GOT WIRED INTO THE HOUSE CAME FROM ONE ENTERPRISING HOBO WHO KNEW HOW TO BUILD THINGS, AND ERECTED A WIND CHARGER AT OUR HOME. USING WINDMILL BLADES, AND TRACTOR TRAILER ALTERNATORS, WE HAVE PERENNIAL WINDS IN THE HILLS OF LAMPASSAS SO WHY NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT? I WONDER WHAT PEOPLE WOULD DO IF THEY HAD TO GO LIVE THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY?, PROBABLY STEP IN FRONT OF A FAST-MOVING TRAIN.

THE BIG THING NOW-A-DAYS IS ENTERTAINMENT, WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF ENTERTAINMENT?, TURN ON THE TV?, THROW IN A DVD?, OR BLU-RAY?, STREAM SOMETHING ON YOUR PHONE? EVER HEARD OF TURNING ON THE RADIO AND USING YOUR IMAGINATION?, AS A CHILD I LISTENED TO SEVERAL RADIO SHOWS THAT EMPLOYED DIALOG AND SOUND EFFECTS. WHEN YOU LISTEN AND USE YOUR IMAGINATION.....?, OF COURSE YOUR IMAGINATION AND EXPERIENCES IN LIFE ARE WHAT DETERMINES THE SCENES YOU IMAGINE. OTHERWISE WE'D SIT AROUND A CAMPFIRE AND LISTEN TO THE HOBO'S SING OR TELL TALES, MANY OF THE TALES WERE OUT-AND-OUT LIES BUT IT'S THE WAY THEY WERE TOLD THAT HELD THE LISTENER'S ATTENTION. MANY OF THESE TALES HAVE BEEN REPEATED BY FOLKLORISTS OVER THE YEARS SUCH AS AMERICA'S CLOWN PRINCE - RED SKELTON WITH HIS CHARACTERS FROM CLEM KADIDDLEHOPPER, TO FREDDIE THE FREELOADER, OR THE HOBO STORY TELLER UTAH PHILLIPS! OVER THE YEARS I'VE LISTENED TO MANY TALL TALE TELLERS SITTING AROUND A CAMPFIRE, MOST OF THEM COULD (AND HAVE) BECOME WRITERS FOR COMEDY OR SATIRE SHOWS ON THE RADIO OR TV.

IN 1972, AT AGE 13, I HIT THE ROAD AFTER MY MOTHER CAUGHT THE WESTBOUND FROM A RESPIRATORY ILLNESS CAUSED BY UNREGULATED FIELD SPRAYING AND TOO MUCH DIESEL SMOKE FROM

WORKING IN TRUCK STOPS. THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES STARTED PAPERWORK TRYING TO PUT ME IN AN ORPHAN HOME STATING THAT I HAD NO FAMILY. MY FAMILY WAS AND IS HOBOES AND KNOWING THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTIONS WERE COMING SEVERAL OF THE HOBOES WHO KNEW MY MOTHER AND HER FEELINGS EXTENSIVELY ABOUT ORPHANAGES CAME AND HELPED ME BOARD MY 1ST FREIGHT TRAIN. OF COURSE, THIS WASN'T REALLY MY 1ST FREIGHT TRAIN TO RIDE, MY MOTHER TOOK ME ON THE 1ST TRAIN I EVER RODE. WHEN SHE ROLLED US OUT OF BRAZIL ON THE PENNSYLVANIA R.R, ALTHOUGH AT AGE 2 I HAD NO MEMORY OF THAT TRIP, STILL SOMETHING MUST HAVE GOT INTO MY BLOOD DURING THAT JOURNEY BECAUSE I NEVER HAVE BEEN AFRAID OF FREIGHT TRAINS AND LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING, HEARING, AND SMELLING ONE.

THE PUDDLE JUMPER ONLY ROLLED ALONG AT 10 MPH. BUT RAN AFTER DARK AND TOOK ME 13 MILES TO TEMPLE WHERE I GOT OFF THE TRAIN AND TRIED TO GO FURTHER NORTH ON THE M.K.T, A TRAIN WAS MADE UP READY TO LEAVE. I THOUGHT IT WOULD GO NORTH TO FT. WORTH THAT NIGHT SO I FOUND AN EMPTY BOXCAR AND CLIMBED ON BOARD, BUT THE NEXT MORNING I WOKE UP 1/4 OF A MILE BACK OVER IN THE YARD OF THE GULF COLORADO & SANTA FE, WHAT A BUMMER! I WENT TO FT. WORTH WANTING TO GET UP TO WICHITA FALLS AND I NEEDED TO GET UP TO AN AREA OF FT. WORTH CALLED SAGINAW WHERE THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD HAS A YARD WHICH I NEEDED TO "CATCH OUT" FROM. AT THAT TIME I DIDN'T KNOW WHICH CITY BUS TO TAKE SO I WALKED THE ENTIRE 9 MILES, BY THE TIME I GOT THERE I WAS SO TIRED I LAID DOWN IN SOME WEEDS AND SLEPT UNTIL SUNSET. A WESTBOUND PULLED IN AND I BOARDED THE BACK PORCH OF A GRAIN CAR, WAITED OUT THE "BULL" SCANNING THE TRAIN, AFTER WHICH IT BEGAN TO PULL. AAAAAAH, WHAT A FEELING OF RELIEF, I'M ON MY WAY WEST, RIDING AT NIGHT ALWAYS IS A PLEASURE, TOWNS APPEAR IN THE DISTANCE LIKE TINY POINTS OF LIGHT. AS WE GET NEARER THE LIGHTS GET BRIGHTER AND SOON WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF DOWNTOWN, LOTS OF ACTIVITY, BUT NO ONE SEES ME, JUST ANOTHER TRAIN, THEY CAN'T SEE A HOBO ON BOARD. I ALWAYS ENJOYED TRAVELING BY MYSELF WITH ONLY ME TO WORRY ABOUT, I CAN RELAX MORE WITH NO PARTNER TO MAKE A FOOLISH

MISTAKE THAT WOULD GET US BOTH THROWN OFF IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.

I TRAVELED WITH A GROUP OUT OF PASCO TO VANCOUVER WASHINGTON ON AN EMPTY CAR-CARRIER THAT CHANGED CREWS IN WISHRAM, WHEN WE MADE THE YARD WE SPIED A LARGE PILE OF COPPER WIRE. SMALL BUT HEAVY SPOOLS, AND THE 7 OF US OVERLOADED OUR ALREADY HEAVY BACKPACKS WITH AS MANY OF THESE SPOOLS AS WE COULD CARRY. WE WERE BROKE AND WITH COPPER BEING BOUGHT AT \$.80 A POUND (AT THAT TIME) WE SAW THIS AS TRAMP GOLD, THE HOBO GODS WERE WATCHING OUT FOR US THAT DAY. WE LATER LEARNED THAT A TRUCK HAD CRASHED AT THAT SPOT AND WHAT WE STUMBLED UPON WAS WHAT COULDN'T BE RETRIEVED. WE MADE SEVERAL TRIPS BACK TO THAT SPOT, EACH LOAD WE BROUGHT OUT BROUGHT US \$250.00 PER TRIP. I NEVER FELT BAD ABOUT IT, WE WERE RETRIEVING A SEMI-PRECIOUS METAL THAT IF LEFT IN PLACE WOULD POLLUTE THE GROUND WATER. AND WE HELPED THE LOCAL ECONOMY WITH ALL THE EATING AND BEER WE CONSUMED. BUT MOSTLY I'D RATHER TRAVEL BY MYSELF AND BECAME KNOWN TO THE MANY "BULLS" I WAS ACQUAINTED WITH OVER THE YEARS (ASIDE FROM MY ROAD NAME) AS NOT AFRAID TO RIDE ALONE!

AND THIS BRINGS ME TO THE LETTERS F.T.R.A.!, BACK IN THE EARLY 1990's SEVERAL VIET NAM VETERANS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER IN HAVRE MONTANA, TOTALLY DISENFRANCHISED WITH THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S TREATMENT OF VETERANS. THEY DECIDED TO ORGANIZE AS A GROUP AND WATCH OUT FOR EACH OTHER AS WELL AS THE OTHER HOBOS STILL ON THE ROAD, MANY OF THEM WORLD WAR 2 AND KOREAN WAR VETERANS. THEY VOWED TO LIVE OFF THE GRID, KEEP UP THE OLD HOBO JUNGLES, AND TAKE CARE OF THOSE STILL ON THE ROAD, THEY DECIDED ON A LETTER DESIGNATION TO REPRESENT THEMSELVES F.T.R.A. THE LETTERS STOOD FOR - FUCK THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION, I WAS ACQUAINTED WITH SEVERAL OF WHO WERE KNOWN AS THE ORIGINAL 13. PREACHER STEVE, DANTE FUCWA, DAN'L BOONE, SPACE MAN JOHN, AND SHOT DOWN WILLS WERE THE ONES THAT I KNEW.

THESE GUYS KNEW THAT IF THIS LETTER DESIGNATION GOT KNOWN ON THE ROAD THAT THEY WOULD HAVE NO CONTROL OVER IT SO 21 DAYS LATER THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE F.T.R.A. DISBANDED THE ORGANIZATION.

THE GROUP KNOWN NOW AS THE F.T.R.A. (FREIGHT TRAIN RIDERS OF AMERICA) HAVE NO RELATIONSHIP TO THE ORIGINAL 13. AND ANY IDEA THAT THEY DO IS REPUGNANT, AND DOES A GREAT DISSERVICE TO THESE WORLD WAR 2, KOREAN WAR & VIETNAM WAR VETERANS, WHO ARE ALSO OLD TIME HOBOES. AS OPPOSED TO THE DISINFORMATION THAT IS CIRCULATED THROUGHOUT THE DIFFERENT POLICE AGENCIES BOTH STATE AND FEDERAL BY A FORMER SPOKANE WASHINGTON POLICE OFFICER NAMED ROBERT GRANDENETTI. UPSET THAT HE LEFT NO GREAT IMPRESSION IN LIFE HE JUMPED ON A TRACKSIDE MURDER AND LOOSELY CONNECTED IT WITH FREIGHT TRAIN RIDING HOBO'S. HE THEN LEAPED UPON THE INITIALS F.T.R.A. AND TRIED TO CONNECT THE IMAGINARY DOTS HE HAD IN HIS HEAD, MANY BELIEVE THAT IT WAS HE THAT INVENTED THE F.T.R.A. THAT PEOPLE WORRY ABOUT NOW AND IS LIVING HIS LIFE WITH DELUSIONS OF THE GRANDUER, TRYING TO BE A FINAL AUTHORITY ON A SUBJECT HE HAS NO REAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT!

THERE'S STILL VETERANS RIDING THE RAILS TODAY, MOST OF THEM REMINISCING ABOUT DAYS GONE BY, LIVING LIFE ON THEIR OWN TERMS. SURVIVORS FROM A WAR THAT THEY WERE SENT OVERSEAS TO FIGHT BY A GOVERNMENT WHO CARE'S NOTHING ABOUT PEACE OR PEOPLE AND ONLY ABOUT CONTROL OF THE MASSES. I DON'T WANT TO PREACH A SERMON HERE BUT I VERY WELL COULD: CONTROL IS THE CONSTANT THAT MAKES THE WORLD CONTINUE TO THRIVE. CONTROL ABOUT WHERE YOU LIVE, CONTROL ABOUT WHAT YOU DO FOR A LIVING, WHETHER OR NOT YOU PAY TAXES, AND THE INDOCTRINATION ABOUT HOW BAD IT IS TO LIVE OFF-THE-GRID. BUT HOBOES HAVE BEEN DOING THIS SINCE THE FIRST 2 HOBOES JUMPED ON A PASSING FREIGHT TRAIN AT THE END OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR. USED TO LIVING LIFE IN THE OPEN, IN THE WOODS AND FIELDS PRIOR TO GOING TO WAR, OR LEARNED FROM GOING THROUGH THE WAR, SO LIVING IN THE OPEN IS NOTHING TO

HOBOS. IT'S CONSIDERED REPREHENSIBLE TO THE MAINSTREAM SOCIETY BROUGHT UP TO BELIEVE THAT YOU MUST LIVE IN A CITY, YOU MUST WORK A DEAD-END JOB, YOU MUST PAY TAXES, BUT PEOPLE LIVE LIKE A HOBOS EVERY DAY. CONSIDER THE FOLKS THAT LIVE OFF THE GRID IN ALASKA, OR MONTANA, FISHING AND TRAPPING FOR A LIVING. NO MATTER WHAT AUTHORITIES TRY TO TELL YOU, FOLKS DO THIS WITH NO PROBLEM EVERYDAY OF THEIR LIVES, I LIVED IN THIS FASHION BETWEEN THE YEARS OF 1972 AND 2001.

BEING RESPONSIBLE WITH AN OPEN FIRE AND MAKING SURE IT DIDN'T CATCH THE WOODS OR FIELDS ABLAZE, LIKE MOST NATIVE AMERICANS. HOBOS FEEL FIRE IS A SACRED THING, COOKING, HEATING, COMMUNITY GATHERING, CLEANSING, MOST HOBOS CAMPFIRES ARE KNOWN AS FRIENDLY FIRES, THEY ARE NEVER OUT OF CONTROL. A WELCOMING BEACON IN THE DARK MUCH LIKE A SEARCHLIGHT IS TO A SHIP APPROACHING A COAST LINE. IF YOU LOOK OFF A MAINLINE FROM ANY TRAIN YARD YOU MIGHT SEE A HOBOS CAMPFIRE, IF YOU WALKED DOWN AND ASKED PERMISSION TO COME IN THE CAMP MORE OFTEN THAN NOT YOU'D BE WELCOMED.

ALMOST EVERY HOBOS CAMPFIRE IS CELEBRATED AND RESPECTED IN THE SAME WAY, AFTER BUILDING THE FIRE THE 4 DIRECTIONAL WINDS ARE SALUTED. THE NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, AND WEST WINDS, EACH ARE RESPECTED FOR THEIR INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES, AND PERSONALITIES, AND CAMPFIRE ASHES ARE ADDED. HOBOS FEEL THAT EACH CAMPFIRE IS DIFFERENT, SOME PEOPLE MAY GATHER AT ONE FIRE THAT ARE NOT AT THE NEXT FIRE. BUT PART OF THEIR SPIRIT GOES INTO THE FIRE AND REMAINS IN THE ASHES, ADDING THOSE ASHES TO THE FIRE ALLOWS PEOPLE WHO CAN'T BE THERE IN BODY TO BE THERE IN SPIRIT. SOME FOLKS CALL THIS EASTERN MYSTICISM BUT IN REALITY, IT IS HOBOS FACT, CARRYING THESE ASHES WITH YOU FROM FIRE TO FIRE WILL BRING YOU GOOD LUCK! AND ON THAT NOTE LETS TALK ABOUT ASKING PERMISSION, IT'S A THING CALLED RESPECT, SOMETHING THAT IS SORELY LACKING IN TODAY'S WORLD! YOU HAVE A HOME OR AN APARTMENT, AND YOU WOULDN'T WANT SOMEONE JUST BARGING IN LIKE THEY OWN

THE PLACE, YOU'D WANT THEM TO KNOCK OR RING THE DOOR BELL AND ASK TO BE INVITED IN. SO YOU DON'T JUST BARGE INTO A HOBOS CAMP, YOU ASK PERMISSION TO ENTER, THIS IS THEIR HOME, IT'S WHERE THEY LIVE AND MAKE THEIR LIVES, JUST LIKE YOUR OWN HOME, SHOW SOME RESPECT!

BUT BACK TO ME, I'VE ENJOYED CAMPING ALONG THE ARKANSAS RIVER IN PUEBLO COLORADO, AS WELL AS THE GRAND JUNCTION OF THE GUNNISON, AND COLORADO RIVERS IN GRAND JUNCTION COLORADO. WORKING IN THAT TOWN PAINTING HOUSES, OR DOING WAREHOUSE WORK FOR THE COUNTY MARKET GROCERY STORES. AND ALWAYS THAT CONSTANT, THE HAUNTING REFRAIN OF A TRAIN HORN BLOWING THROUGH THE NIGHT, THE SIRENS CALL, THAT GRAND LOVER CALLING ME TO CLIMB ON BOARD AND ENJOY AN EVERYDAY ADVENTURE. A RETURN TO DAYS GONE BY, THAT'S WHAT I HEAR NOW AT NIGHT, ALTHOUGH IT'S THE HORNS OF THE C.S.X. RUNNING TO PARMA OHIO AND NOT THE HORNS OF THE RIO GRANDE, OR THE B.N. OR THE M.K.T, ST.L.S.W, S.P, K.C.S, MIDSOUTH, G.M. & O, I.C.G, L. & N, IA.IS, OR EVEN THE CONRAIL.

STILL I LONG TO GO BACK AND SEE THE FEATHER RIVER CANYON, AND THE TOWN OF PORTOLA, ROLLING THROUGH THE WOODS OF THE CASCADE MOUNTAINS. CROSSING THE HIGHLINE ON THE B.N. GOING INTO FLATHEAD TUNNEL AND COMING DOWN INTO WHITEFISH MONTANA. OR RIDING THE M.R.L. ACROSS LAKE COURE D'LANE AND THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS INTO MISSOULA, AND HELENA. OR TAKING A BUS DOWN TO BUTTE TO SEE THE ABANDONED TRAIN DEPOTS OF THE GREAT NORTHERN AND THE MILWAUKEE ROAD AND THEN WALKING 2 MILES TO SILVER BOW TO RIDE DOWN TO POCA TELLO IDAHO.

BUT I'D LOVE TO RIDE AGAIN FROM ROPER YARD IN SOUTH SALT LAKE ACROSS SOLDIER SUMMIT, THROUGH HELPER, AND REDLANDS CANYON, THEN CROSS TENNESSEE PASS AND ROLL THROUGH ROYAL GORGE. BUT MY BIGGER THRILL WOULD BE RUNNING THE BACK ROADS AND RAILS OF LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, ALABAMA, AND GEORGIA, SO MUCH TIME SPENT IN TRAVEL IS IT ANY WONDER WHY

NOW AT MY AGE THAT I HAVE SUCH ITCHY FEET? I'D LOVE TO SEE THE BACK STREAMS AROUND WARM SPRINGS GEORGIA, OR RIDE THROUGH THE NORTHERN MOUNTAINS OF GEORGIA INTO CHATTANOOGA AND THEN INTO NASHVILLE. CAMPING ALONG THE TENNESSEE RIVER HUNTING AND FISHING, ENJOYING THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S GREAT CREATION, THE LAPPING OF THE WATER, THE RUSTLING OF THE LEAVES IN THE TREES, THE WHISPER OF THE WIND AND THE SWEET SMELL OF AN UNPOLLUTED PIECE OF NATURE.

YES, I'D LOVE TO GO TO MARDI GRAS DOWN IN NEW ORLEANS, ALTHOUGH I HAVE BEEN THERE FOR BLUES FESTIVALS, AND WORKED CLEANING UP AFTER NEW ORLEANS SAINTS GAMES. OR I'VE GONE ALLIGATOR HUNTING WITH CAJUNS IN THE SWAMPS SOUTH OF PIERRE PART BOATING THROUGH THE BAYOUS INTO HOUMA. OR VISITING FRIENDS IN BATON ROUGE AND WORKING FOR THEM IN THEIR DEEP-FRIED BLOOMING ONION STAND DURING RIVER FEST. OR JUST RIDING NORTH ON THE K.C.S. THROUGH THE OUACHITA MOUNTAINS INTO JOPLIN TO CATCH AN EASTBOUND ON THE MISSOURI & NORTH ARKANSAS, AND ROLLING INTO CARTHAGE WHERE A FRIEND OF MINE LIVES THAT MAKES MOONSHINE FROM A FAMILY RECIPE THAT GOES BACK 5 GENERATIONS, AND ALSO GROWS MEDICAL MARIJUANA. HE ALWAYS NEEDS HELP HE CAN TRUST TO CLEAN, CUT, AND PACKAGE THE "BUD" FOR SHIPPING TO DISPENSARIES IN KANSAS CITY. OR ROLLING NORTH ON THE RIVER LINE UP THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER ON WHAT USED TO BE MILWAUKEE ROAD FOLLOWING UP TOWARDS DUBUQUE IOWA JUST ROLLING. ENJOYING THE RIDE, THE VIBRATIONS OF THE TRAIN, THE SWEET SMELL OF THE CLEAN MOISTURE FILLED WOODS THAT PERMEATE THE PLACES BETWEEN THE CITIES THAT ABOUND THE RIVER. STOPPING TO VISIT WITH FRIENDS I MADE OVER THE YEARS IN MUSCATINE, DAVENPORT, CLINTON, AND DUBUQUE.

BUT MY OTHER PLEASURE WOULD BE TO RIDE THE ROUTE WEST FROM CENTENNIAL YARD IN FT. WORTH ON THE UNION PACIFIC (FORMERLY THE TEXAS PACIFIC, AND LATER THE MISSOURI PACIFIC.) OUT TO BIG SPRING. THE WIDE OPEN RANGE OF WEST TEXAS, TREELESS, ARID, ALMOST DESERT PLAINS, WHERE IT'S YOU

WITH MILES AND MILES OF NOTHING. BEAUTIFUL SUNSETS, BEAUTIFUL SUNRISES, HOT DAYS, COOL NIGHTS, AND SPACE WHERE YOU CAN TRULY COMMUNICATE WITH GOD AND CLEAR YOUR HEAD. I'M SURE EVERYONE NEEDS A PLACE LIKE THIS WHERE THEY CAN DISAPPEAR FROM THE WORLD AND COORDINATE THEIR PRIORITIES IN THEIR LIVES, AND TRULY THIS IS MINE. NOT JUST WEST TEXAS, BUT GETTING ON A FREIGHT TRAIN AND RIDING, THE WIND IN MY FACE, THE SUN AT MY BACK, NO DIRECTION, NO TIME SCHEDULE, JUST ROLLING, THAT SHOULD SAY IT ALL!

MANY MAY ASK "HOW DO YOU FEED YOURSELF WHEN TRAVELING", ANSWERING THIS QUESTION MAY HAVE SOME PEOPLE SHRIEKING AGHAST AT THE ANSWER. IT'S CALLED DUMPSTER DIVING, NOW THAT CALLS UP IMAGES OF A CRUSTY OLD MAN DIGGING AROUND IN A TRASH CAN EATING WHATEVER EVER SLIMY DRIPPING CRAP HE FINDS. BUT I'M HERE TO TELL YOU THAT THE REALITY ISN'T WHAT IS DEPICTED BY MOST HOLLYWOOD TV SHOWS OR MOVIES, MOST FOODS THAT ARE FROZEN OR ICE-COLD ARE STILL SAFE TO EAT. FURTHERMORE GROCERY STORES ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REMOVE ITEMS FROM THE SHELF IF IT IS 1 DAY PAST THE SELL-BY DATE, HOWEVER CANNED AND COMMERCIALY PACKAGED FOODS HAVE PRESERVATIVES MIXED IN THEM. AND ARE REASONABLY SAFE TO EAT UP TO 3 WEEKS AFTER RESCUE FROM A DUMPSTER, THIS IS AN ECONOMICAL WAY TO FEED A HOBO SO AS TO KEEP HOBO'S FROM BEING A DRAIN ON LOCAL RESOURCES! MANY MEALS HAVE I EATEN FROM DUMPSTER DIVING, ONE YEAR I WAS TRAVELING FROM DENVER TO SHELBY ON BURLINGTON NORTHERN AND JUMPED OFF IN CHEYENNE, I HAD 10 HOURS TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT TRAIN WAS HEADED NORTH.

BOTH ME AND ARKANSAS TRAVELER WERE BROKE, AND I KNEW THAT THERE WAS AN IGA STORE 2 BLOCKS FROM THE YARD, WE WENT UP TO BUY TOBACCO, TOP BRAND, THAT'S WHAT WE ALWAYS SMOKED, AND AS WE WALKED BACK TO THE YARD I SPIED THE DUMPSTER. DIVING INSIDE I FOUND BAGS OF TRASH, A BOX OF STILL FROZEN PIZZAS, AND 2 ALUMINUM PIE TINS WHICH I

PROMPTLY BOXED UP AND TOOK BACK TO THE JUNGLE WITH ME. KNOWING THAT FOOD TAKES LONGER TO COOK AT HIGH ALTITUDES THE ALUMINUM PIE TINS WOULD COME IN HANDY, AFTER BUILDING AND BLESSING THE FIRE I IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT OPENING THE FROZEN PIZZAS AND SLIDING THEM INTO THE PIE TINS. AND COOKING THEM, SOON I HAD COFFEE GOING AND THE AROMA DREW THE ATTENTION OF THE FOLKS IN THE YARD OFFICE, EVERYONE EXCEPT THE STATION AGENT AND DISPATCHER CAME OUT LOOKING FOR A FREE MEAL. SHARING THIS WAS ONLY RIGHT SEEING OUR FRIENDS, THE B.N. RAILROAD, ALLOWED US TO SET UP CAMP ON THEIR PROPERTY, WHAT TRIPPED ME OUT WAS THE ONCOMING INTERMODAL CREW INVITED US TO RIDE THE UNITS WITH THEM NORTH AS LONG AS WE BROUGHT SOME COOKED PIZZA WITH US. WE ENDED UP FEEDING RAILROAD CREWS FROM CHEYENNE TO CASPER WYOMING, LAUREL, GREAT FALLS, AND SHELBY MONTANA.

THEN THERE'S THE QUESTION OF HOW DO YOU KEEP CLEAN?, SOME STILL TRY TO MAKE THEIR OWN SOAP WHICH FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE DONE IT - IT'S NOT THAT HARD, JUST TIME CONSUMING. I USUALLY CARRY A BOTTLE OF DAWN DISHWASHING DETERGENT, AND A SCRUB BRUSH TO SCRUB MY DISHES, MY CLOTHES, AND MY BODY. IT CAN LEAVE YOUR SKIN KIND OF RED LOOKING AND SORE BUT REALIZE AFTER 2 WEEKS, AND ANYWHERE FROM 200 TO 1000 MILES MY BODY FEELS BETTER WHEN IT'S CLEAN. AND AFTER THAT MANY MILES I REALLY NEED TO SCRUB MY BODY AND MY CLOTHES, BESIDES WATER FLOWS OVER THE GROUND FREELY, AND GOD DOESN'T CHARGE US FOR THE SUNLIGHT OR THE HEAT IN THE SUMMERTIME!

THEN THERE'S THE CONCERN ABOUT HOW YOU CLOTHE YOURSELF, AND SUPPLY FOOTWEAR, WELL IF YOU WORK WHILE TRAVELING THERE'S ALWAYS THE FAMOUS GOOD WILL AND SALVATION ARMY STORES. AND SOMETIMES (IF YOU FEEL REALLY FLUSH) YOU CAN ALWAYS GO TO WAL-MART! THEN FOR VETERANS THERE'S AN EVENT CALLED THE HOMELESS VETERANS STAND DOWN,

ORGANIZED BY SEVERAL VIETNAM VETERANS SURPLUS MILITARY CLOTHING, BOOTS, FOOD (LOTS OF "C" RATIONS, AND MRE'S) THIS EVENT BECAME POPULAR WITH HOBO'S. IT WAS A WAY TO REPLENISH THEIR TRAVELING SUPPLIES, AND EVEN ATTAIN NEW SLEEPING BAGS, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT FOLKS FROM MILITARY SURPLUS STORES GATHERED THERE LOOKING TO PURCHASE WHAT WAS ISSUED TO RESUPPLY THEIR STORES. AND MANY HOMELESS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS TO GAIN THE \$\$\$ TO FEED THEIR ALCOHOLIC, OR DRUG HABITS, BUT NO ONE COULD SEPARATE A HOBO FROM THEIR ISSUE FOR ANY AMOUNT OF \$\$\$\$. THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WERE ISSUED WOULD BE THEIR TRAVELING HOME AND THAT WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN GETTING DRUNK, OR HIGH! OTHERWISE IT IS NOT THAT DIFFERENT FROM MOST DAILY LIVES OF ANYBODY, BUT APART FROM YOUR DAILY LIFE MINE HAS NO TETHERS, AND I CAN PICK UP AND GO WHENEVER I GET THE ITCH, AT LEAST I USED TO UNTIL I DECIDED TO GET A HOME LOCATION, AND A PHONE NUMBER!

ANOTHER THING THAT FOLKS ASK ME IS HOW I ENDED UP WITH MY "ROAD NAME" THE TEXAS MADMAN, THAT CAME ABOUT WHEN I WAS 15. I WAS TRAVELING WITH 3 OTHER GUYS WHO I KNEW FROM THE HOBO JUNGLE IN LAMPASSAS. WE WERE IN CENTRAL MISSOURI IN THE TOWN OF CHILLICOTHE, WE HAD TRAVELED THERE WITH A MAN WHO ONE OF THE GUYS SAID THEY KNEW WELL WHO ALSO KNEW THE AGRICULTURE WORK IN CENTRAL MISSOURI. SEASONAL CABBAGE PICKING WAS GOING ON AT THAT TIME SO WE JUNGLED OUT AND WENT TO WORK ON A FARM THAT SOLD TO FARM FRESH FOODS. NOW LET ME TELL YOU THAT WORKING IN A FARM FIELD IN CENTRAL MISSOURI, IN THE SUMMER, WITH NO BREEZES WILL HAVE YOU SWEATING ALL THE ENERGY OUT OF YOUR BODY. AND AT THE END OF THE DAY YOU'LL BE SO TIRED IT'LL BE ALL YOU CAN DO TO DRAG YOURSELF DOWN THE ROAD HOME, AND THAT'S WHAT WE WERE DOING GOING BACK TO OUR JUNGLE.

EVERY EVENING WE ELECTED ONE OF OUR NUMBER TO GO INTO TOWN TO BUY OUR NIGHTLY PROVISIONS, WELL THIS EVENING WAS DIFFERENT. THE PERSON WE ELECTED TO GO TO TOWN HAD BEEN GONE FOR THE BETTER PART OF 3 HOURS WHICH FORCED US TO GO LOOK FOR HIM. WE FOUND HIM IN A LOCAL BEER GARDEN DRINKING UP ALL OUR HARD EARNED PROFITS, WHICH (OF COURSE) MADE US QUITE MAD, WE TOOK HIM BACK TO OUR JUNGLE AND TIED HIM TO A TREE. THEN WE STARTED THE DISCUSSION ABOUT HOW WE SHOULD PUNISH THIS GUY, THE OLDER HOBO'S WERE SAYING "WE SHOULD DO THIS" AND "WE SHOULD DO THAT", AFTER HEARING ABOUT 10 MINUTES OF THIS DISCUSSION I GOT FED UP. I GRABBED AN OLD BOXCAR BRAKE HOSE AND BEGAN BEATING THIS DRUNKEN FOOL, THE OTHER OLD HOBO'S JUST WATCHED AS I DISHED OUT MY PUNISHMENT. AFTER I FINISHED BEATING THIS SORRY EXCUSE FOR A MAN THE OLD-TIMERS UNTIED HIM AND TOLD HIM IN A STERN NO NEGOTIATION MANNER "STAY OUT OF THESE FIELDS, AND STAY OFF THE TRAINS. WE ARE WELL TRAVELED AND IF WE FIND YOU ON A TRAIN WE WILL TAKE YOU SOMEWHERE THAT NO ONE WILL FIND YOU," THEN THEY GAVE HIM A SINGLE WOODEN MATCH. TO THE OLD-TIMERS THIS MEANS "GO START YOUR OWN JUNGLE", THEN THESE OLD-TIMERS TOLD ME "WE SHOULD HAVE HAD A CAMERA, YOU WERE FIREY RED, YOU HAD SMOKE COMING OUT OF YOUR EARS, AND YOU WERE MAKING SOUNDS LIKE A WILD ANIMAL, FROM NOW ON WHEN ANYONE SEES YOU THEY'LL KNOW YOU AS THE TEXAS MADMAN."

I NEVER DID TAKE PICTURES OF MY DAYS ON THE ROAD MUCH TO MY CHAGRIN. I CAN TALK AND DESCRIBE ALL I WANT BUT NOTHING CAN REALLY SHOW TO FOLKS WHAT THIS LIFE IS LIKE THE WAY PICTURES CAN. READING THE WRITTEN WORD WILL SPARK MILLIONS OF MEMORIES IN MY HEAD AND I CAN REPLAY THE INCIDENTS AND JOURNEYS IN VIVID LIVING COLOR. SUCH AS BEING IN SALT LAKE CITY WANTING TO GO ACROSS TO PORTOLA CALIFORNIA, I HAD TO RIDE THE U.P, I WAS WAITING UNDER A STREET OVERPASS NEXT TO THE NORTH SALT LAKE YARD AND FOUND A FRIENDLY SWITCHMAN

WHO DIRECTED ME TO THE RIGHT TRACK AND TRAIN. IT WAS HOT THAT AFTERNOON WAITING FOR THIS TRAIN TO MOVE, BUT NOT AS HOT AS WHAT I'D GO THROUGH THE NEXT EVENING. THE TRAIN PULLED AND WE WENT PAST THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE LAKE AND THE EVAPORATION PONDS OF MORTON SALT COMPANY. WITH A CREW CHANGE AT CARLIN NEVADA, AND ANOTHER AT ELKO WE BLASTED ACROSS THE DESERT OF NORTHERN NEVADA AFTER DARK THE AIR TEMPERATURE COOLING DOWN FROM 97* TO 65*, AND GOING FROM 90% HUMIDITY TO 5% HUMIDITY. WE MADE IT TO WINNEMUCCA IN TIME TO SEE A BEAUTIFUL DESERT SUNRISE, ALSO KNOWN AS THE DESERT ROSE! THIS LEFT ME WAITING FOR THE NEXT CREW TO GET ON BOARD TO TAKE THE TRAIN FURTHER WEST.

WHEN IT FINALLY PULLS THE TIME IS 12:00 NOON, THE TEMPERATURE IS ALREADY 80*, AND EXPECTED TO GO HIGHER AS THE DAY PROGRESSES. BY THE TIME WE GET TO GERLACH NEVADA THE TEMPERATURE HAS CLIMBED TO 117* IN THE SHADE, GERLACH IS ONE OF THE LAST REMAINING OF COMPANY TOWNS, BUILT BY MORTON SALT TO HARVEST THE DRY LAKE BEDS SOUTH AND NORTH OF THE TOWN. IF YOU EVER TRAVEL TO THIS TOWN MAKE SURE YOUR CAR IS WELL MAINTAINED AND YOU HAVE AN AMPLE WATER SUPPLY WITH YOU, ON THE NORTH SIDE OF TOWN IS THE LARGEST SALT PAN IN THE UNITED STATES. STRETCHING 5 MILES WIDE IT ALSO STRETCHES 33 MILES LONG, CORE SAMPLES HAVE IT GOING A DEPTH OF 300 YARDS, MORE SALT THAN IN THE GREAT SALT LAKE! WHEN WE MADE IT TO GERLACH THE TEMPERATURE HAD GONE UP TO 117* AND I WAS AS DRY AS A BONE, AND BURNING UP, KNOWING THERE IS AN IRRIGATION DITCH NEXT TO THE TRACKS I GOT OFF THE TRAIN AND DUNKED MY HEAD UNDER THE WATER.

GOOD GOD THE WATER WAS ICE COLD, BUT SOOOOOOO REFRESHING, I FILLED MY WATER JUG AND GOT BACK ON THE TRAIN, AS SOON AS I DID IT PULLED. AND WE WERE ROLLING WEST TOWARDS CALIFORNIA, AS THE TRAIN HEADS WEST IT BEGINS TO CLIMB INTO THE SIERRA'S. BY THE TIME IT PEAKS THE SIERRA'S YOU CAN LOOK DOWN ONTO GERLACH AND THE TOWN LOOKS LIKE A TINY BLACK DOT ON THE DESERT FLOOR. AND THE TEMPERATURE GOES

DOWN FROM 117* TO 40* VERY QUICKLY, AND FOLKS WONDER WHY I USED TO CARRY A WINTER COAT DURING THE SUMMERTIME, DUUUUH!

ANOTHER TIME I WAS IN KANSAS CITY HEADING NORTH ON THE IOWA DIVISION OF THE B.N, AND RUNNING UP THE MISSOURI RIVERSIDE, I WAS ON A BOXCAR WHEN A RAINSTORM BLEW IN. HIGH WINDS, LIGHTNING, THUNDER, RAIN BLOWING SIDWAYS, IT FELT LIKE I WAS IN A WAGNERIAN OPERA, I WAS LOOKING AROUND FOR THE FAT LADIES WITH THE SPEARS AND HORNED HELMETS.

I REMEMBER THESE TIMES AS IF THEY HAPPENED YESTERDAY, LIKE BEING IN SHREVEPORT LOUISIANA WAITING OUT THE DAYS UNTIL IT WAS TIME TO HEAD TO AMORY MISSISSIPPI. THERE IS A RAILROAD FESTIVAL IN THE TOWN OF AMORY AND ALSO CELEBRATES HOBOES THAT I ALWAYS TRIED TO ATTEND. IN SHREVEPORT I RAN INTO A HOBO WHO CALLED HIMSELF MONTANA BONES WHO OWNED A RANCH WHERE HE BROKE AND TRAINED RIDING MULES, HE NAMED THE PLACE THE BUSTED ASS RANCH. HE WAS TRAVELING WITH A GUY WHO WAS A CRACKHEAD, BONES TOLD ME HE WANTED TO UNLOAD THE GUY BECAUSE HE WAS "DRAGGING HIM DOWN"! WE WORKED UP \$80.00 AND GAVE IT TO THE GUY WHO PROMPTLY DISAPPEARED INTO THE LOCAL EASTSIDE PROJECTS NEVER TO BE SEEN OR HEARD FROM AGAIN. I TOLD BONES THAT THE RAILROAD FESTIVAL WOULDN'T TAKE PLACE FOR 2+1/2 WEEKS SO I WAS KILLING TIME AND WANTED TO JUST RIDE AND BONES WAS GAME. WE CAUGHT A NORTHBOUND K.C.S. HEADING UP TO KANSAS CITY JUST TO ROLL THROUGH THE OUACHITA MOUNTAINS OF ARKANSAS AND OKLAHOMA, AND MADE IT TO THE TOWN OF HEAVENER.

WHAT A PARADISE, TRUE SMALL TOWN OKLAHOMA, 1 MAIN STREET, ONLY 1 STORE IN TOWN, AN IGA, THIS PLACE IS IN A "DRY COUNTY" BUT DOES HAVE A LIQUOR STORE, THE ONLY ONE IN TOWN IN AN AIRCRAFT SHIPPING CONTAINER, HEAVENER IS A DIVISION POINT. WHAT MAKES THIS PLACE ATTRACTIVE TO ME IS THAT IT'S SURROUNDED BY MOUNTAINS! AND AT NIGHT YOU CAN HEAR EVERY

SOUND FROM EVERY DIRECTION, ALSO IT'S DARK, NO AMBIENT LIGHT, YOU CAN SEE EVERY STAR IN THE MILKY WAY. AND YOU CAN HEAR THE TRAINS COMING DOWN THE MOUNTAINS, ROLLING DOWN THE OUACHITA'S THEY SOUND AT THE PEAK WHICH IS 13 MILES AWAY. BONES AND I WENT UP TO KANSAS CITY AND HUNG OUT AT THE EAST END BY THE K.C.S. YARDS WORKING AT THE FLYING J TRUCK STOP POLISHING CHROME. STAYED A FEW OF DAYS AND CAUGHT BACK SOUTH, WENT TO SHREVEPORT, ACROSS TO BOSSIER CITY, AND CAUGHT A TRAIN EAST CROSSING THE REST OF LOUISIANA AND ROLLING INTO MISSISSIPPI AND THE TOWNS OF VICKSBURG, JACKSON, AND MERIDIAN. HERE WE HAD TO GET A DIFFERENT TRAIN UP THE FORMER G.M. & O. ROUTE TO ARTESIA, AND CATCH A LATE NIGHT LOCAL TO ABERDEEN. AT THIS POINT WE ENDED UP WALKING THE LAST 15 MILES TO AMORY. WE GOT PASSED BY A GUY IN A TRUCK 5 TIMES, WHEN WE GOT TO THE EDGE OF TOWN THIS GUY FINALLY STOPPED AND ASKED IF WE NEEDED A RIDE. I YELLED AT THE GUY "WE DON'T NEED A RIDE NOW, WE'RE HERE, WHY DIDN'T YOU STOP FURTHER BACK?"

ANOTHER RIDE I HAVE TO TELL ABOUT WAS THE 1ST TIME I WENT TO THE EAST COAST HOBO GATHERING, I HAD BEEN INVITED TO THIS EVENT BY THE SPONSOR, RED BIRD EXPRESS, ONE OF OUR MANY KINGS OF THE HOBO'S. I WAS IN CHICAGO AND MADE IT TO THE CHICAGO STOCKYARDS, THE AREA IS ALSO KNOWN AS "BACK OF THE YARDS" AND I SAT AT A McDONALD'S DRINKING COFFEE AND EATING FRIES WHILE WATCHING CONRAIL, TRAIN AFTER TRAIN ROLLED BY. WHEN I FINALLY GOT UP THE NERVE TO CATCH THAT EVENING I WALKED OVER TO A STRETCH OF WOODS AND WAITED FOR A TRAIN TO STOP. THEN I CLIMBED ON BOARD AS THE TRAIN ROLLED THROUGH THE DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOODS OF EAST CHICAGO, MICHIGAN CITY, GARY, AND FINALLY ROLLED INTO ELKHART INDIANA. I EXPECTED THE TRAIN TO BREAK UP HERE, BUT IT CHANGED CREWS AND KEPT GOING, THE NEXT MORNING I WAS ROLLING THROUGH FOSTORIA OHIO AND ENDED UP IN COLLINWOOD YARD EAST OF CLEVELAND. HERE I WAITED OUT A CREW CHANGE, AND A REFUELING TO GO FURTHER TO BUFFALO NEW YORK, WHERE I HAD TO CHANGE RAILROADS.

A QUICK WALK THROUGH A DEPRESSED NEIGHBORHOOD TO CATCH THE DELAWARE & HUDSON RAILROAD AND HEAD OUT FOR BINGHAMTON. I KNEW WE WERE CLOSE TO HALF WAY WHEN THE TRAIN SLOWED DOWN AND WE CROSSED THE GENNESSEE RIVER GORGE IN WHICH FLOWS THE GENNESSEE RIVER, THIS IS ONE OF 11 RIVERS IN THE UNITED STATES THAT RUNS SOUTH TO NORTH. IT HAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WATERFALL, COMPARABLE TO NIAGARA FALLS, AND CENTRAL AFRICA'S VICTORIA FALLS, IT'S IN AN AREA THAT IS A VACATION SPOT FOR THE WEALTHY IN NEW YORK AND OTHER STATES.

ANOTHER TIME AFTER THE NATIONAL HOBO CONVENTION I TRAVELED WITH A RETIRED HOBO NAMED HOBO SLC DOWN TO BALDWIN CITY KANSAS TO ATTEND AN AFTER BRITT HOBO EVENT CALLED BALDWIN CITY HOBO DAYS. LIBERTY JUSTICE STARTED THIS EVENT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BALDWIN CITY RAILWAY AND HAD BUILT A TRAILER OUT OF THE BED OF AN OLD CHEVY TRUCK, WE TRAILED HIM INTO DES MOINES IOWA. HIS TRAILER WAS BOUNCING ALL OVER THE ROAD, ABOUT TO THROW THE HOME-BUILT CABIN ONTO THE HIGHWAY, WE FINALLY HIM PULLED OVER AND HELPED TIE THE SUSPENSION DOWN WITH A BOXCAR TIE STRAP TO GET HIM INTO BALDWIN CITY. THE TOWN WAS TRUE SMALL TOWN KANSAS WITH A SCENIC RAILROAD THAT ALLOWED US TO USE ANY CAR TO SET UP IN, WHICH CAME IN HANDY BECAUSE AS SOON AS WE HIT TOWN A FREAK HAILSTORM BLEW IN AND PELTED US ALL. SO WE TOOK REFUGE IN A WOODEN READING RAILROAD CABOOSE, THE HAIL CONTINUED FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF, WE HOPED THIS WOULD BE THE LAST OF IT SO WE SET UP A TRUE HOBO JUNGLE FURTHER DOWN THE TRACKS. COMPLETE WITH A FIRE PIT MADE FROM A TRUCK RIM AND USED THE GANDYDANCER CAMP CARS TO SLEEP IN, GOOD THING TOO, DURING ONE OF THE TRAIN RIDES ANOTHER HAILSTORM BLEW IN RIGHT AFTER THE TRAIN DERAILED.

THIS WHOLE THING WAS SET UP FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION, AND WAS ADVERTISED IN THE KANSAS CITY STAR NEWSPAPER, AS WELL AS ON A LOCAL TV STATION. THIS WAS DURING THE YEAR THAT SIDE

DOOR PULLMAN KID WAS ELECTED KING OF THE HOBO'S, 1994, ALSO IN ATTENDANCE WAS 1988 KING OF THE HOBO'S FISHBONES, AND 5 TIME ELECTED KING OF THE HOBO'S STEAMTRAIN MAURY GRAHAM ALL 3 OF THEM SLEPT IN A CABOOSE. LIBERTY JUSTICE BUGGED THE CABOOSE WITH A TAPE-RECORDER TO TRY TO GAIN INSPIRATION FOR HIMSELF SEEING THAT HE WAS A SINGER-SONGWRITER TRYING TO GET A CAREER IN MUSIC GOING. IT WAS DURING THIS EVENT THAT SIDEDOOR PULLMAN KID DUBBED ME A GRAND DUKE OF THE HOBO'S, EVENTUALLY LIBERTY JUSTICE WAS CROWNED KING OF THE HOBO'S 5 YEARS LATER. AND FINALLY RODE A COUPLE OF FREIGHT TRAINS, RIGHT AFTER THIS EVENT I GOT A RIDE BACK TO KANSAS CITY AND WAITED AT THE EAST END TO CATCH A NORTHBOUND ON THE C.N.W. UP THROUGH DES MOINES AND INTO SOUTH ST. PAUL. THIS ROUTE WAS ORIGINALLY OPERATED BY THE ROCK ISLAND RAILROAD AND WAS FREQUENTED QUITE OFTEN BY HOBO'S COMING OFF THE HIGHLINE AND HEADING SOUTH WITHOUT GOING THROUGH CHICAGO. AND THIS IS WHY KANSAS CITY BECAME A HUGE HOBO HANGOUT, MANY TIMES HAVE I SPENT UNDER "THE HIGHLINE", AN OVERHEAD RAIL ROUTE THAT TRAINS WOULD TRANSFER BETWEEN EACH OTHER. AN EASY PLACE TO CATCH OUT WEST ON EITHER THE U.P, OR THE ROCK ISLAND/COTTON BELT, AS WELL AS GETTING A RIDE DOWN TO THE " KATY"!

I'M GLAD I WAS ABLE TO LIVE DURING THIS TIME, TRUE BROTHERHOOD BETWEEN HOBO'S AND RAILROADERS, SLOWER TRAINS, CABOOSES, PREPRINTED ORDERS, AND EVERYONE RESPECTED A HOBO JUNGLE. THE ONE UNDER "THE HIGHLINE" ALWAYS STAYED CLEAN, AN AMPLE AMOUNT OF WOOD, X-TRA WATER, A "CACHE" OF FOOD INSIDE AN OLD BATTERY BOX, AND NOBODY "SHITTING WHERE THEY LIVE" LIKE SO MANY HOMELESS CAMP'S ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. COMMON SENSE AND SELF RESPECT WERE PREVALENT THEN, SOMEWHERE IT WAS LOST AND NEEDS TO RETURN! DECENCY IS ANOTHER FACTOR WITH THE HOBO LIFE, AS WELL AS DRESS, BUT LIKE I SAID IN THE OPENING PRELUDE

THE CULTURE EVOLVES, OLD-TIMERS USED TO TRAVEL DRESSED IN BLACK CLOTHES MORE OFTEN GAINED FROM THE FACT THAT THE QUICKEST WORK TO GAIN WAS THAT OF BEING AN UNDERTAKER. DIGGING GRAVES, BURYING UNKNOWN PEOPLE IN THE "POTTERS FIELD", MOST HOBO'S OF THAT DAY (AND THIS SEEMS KIND OF MORBID) WOULD EXCHANGE CLOTHES WITH THOSE THEY WOULD BURY.

DRESSING THE DEAD WITH THEIR WORN OUT CLOTHES, AND PUTTING ON THE NEW CLOTHES SUPPLIED FOR THE DEAD TO BE BURIED IN. THUS THE OLD-TIMERS ALWAYS WORE BLACK, LATER THIS CHANGED TO ANY USED CLOTHES BASICALLY SUPPLIED BY THE PRIVATE SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES ORGANIZED BY MANY DIFFERENT CHURCHES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. AGENCIES LIKE SALVATION ARMY, OR ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, OR GOODWILL, IN MY DAYS THE BEST THING TO ATTAIN WAS BLUE JEANS, THEY COULD BE WORN A LONG TIME, AND GO THOUSANDS OF MILES. BUT NOW THE YOUNG HOBO'S ARE RETURNING TO WEARING ALL BLACK, BLENDING INTO THE SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT WHICH IS USUALLY WHEN THEY CATCH-OUT, AND WHICH IS THE BEST TIME TO DO SO.

BE THAT AS IT MAY WHEN HITTING THE TOWN IT'S ALWAYS BEST TO HAVE CLEAN CLOTHES CARRIED IN YOUR PACK TO VENTURE OFF THE YARD AND HIT THE TOWN, THUS TO BLEND IN WITH THE LOCALS. BUT ASIDE FROM PUBLIC APPEARANCE IT'S ALSO ABOUT HOW YOU REPRESENT YOUR GROUP AS A WHOLE, HOBO'S USUALLY GUARD THEMSELVES WHEN BEING LOOKED AT BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC, AND YET REPRESENTATION OF THE HOBO NATION IS ALWAYS A MUST. THE PROBLEM HERE IS THE GENERAL PUBLIC, WITH "TRAVELING CLOTHES" BEING THE FIRST ITEM BEING LOOKED AT THE PUBLIC CONSIDERS HOBO'S TO BE THE SAME AS THE LOCAL "HOMEGUARD". PUBLIC APPEARANCE!, BUT ALSO THE LOCAL CONSTABULARY (ET.AL.-GUMSHOE, TOWN CLOWN, OR POLICE, WHATEVER TERM YOU WISH TO USE) THEY'RE ALWAYS A SUSPICIOUS LOT WITH US.

HOBOS ALWAYS GUARD THEMSELVES LIKE ANYONE ELSE, THERE ARE THINGS IN EVERYONE'S LIFE THAT IS PERSONAL, THINGS THAT ARE NOT SHARED WITH ANYONE BUT THEMSELVES. AND IT'S THE SAME THING WITH THIS SO CALLED CIVILIZED SOCIETY, PUBLIC OR POLICE, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE IS A STICKY POINT. HOBOS ARE NOT CONSIDERED INTO THE EQUATION, AS IF THERE'S ONE LAW FOR THE SO CALLED CIVILIZED SOCIETY, AND ANOTHER LAW FOR HOBOS, THIS IS BEING 2 FACED, I'VE ALWAYS IDENTIFIED WITH MOVIE AND T.V. STARS IN THIS ASPECT. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE ALMOST ALWAYS IN THE PUBLIC EYE AND YET THERE ARE THINGS THAT ARE PERSONAL, PIECES OF THEIR LIVES THAT ARE JUST FOR THEM, THE PUBLIC AND PAPARAZZI DOES NOT RESPECT THIS AND CONSTANTLY HOUNDS THEM.

FOR HOBOS THEIR LIVES ARE IN 2 ASPECTS, ONE IS MADE PUBLIC WHEN THEY JUMP OFF A TRAIN IN A TOWN, THE OTHER IS FOR THEM WHEN THEY GO BACK TO THEIR JUNGLE (OR THEIR HOME), THE PUBLIC AND POLICE ARE THE HOBOS' PAPARAZZI. ALWAYS HOUNDING THEM, AND USING LIES AND PREJUDICE TO CONSIDER THEM, AND TREATING THEIR HOME (THE JUNGLE) AS IF THEY HAVE NO RIGHT TO HAVE A PRIVATE SPACE, PUBLIC IMAGE, PRIVATE LIFE, AND RESPECT, ONCE AGAIN NEVER CONSIDERED, AAAAAAH GEEZE, HERE I GO AGAIN, PREACHING A SERMON!

THEN THERE'S THE TIME I WAS IN DENVER COLORADO AND WAS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT A SHORTCUT TO GET TO KANSAS CITY WITHOUT GOING THROUGH PUEBLO, IF I DID IT WOULD MEAN RIDING BURLINGTON NORTHERN DOWN AND THEN TRADING OVER TO THE RIO GRANDE INTO FIRST HOISINGTON, HERRINGTON, AND FINALLY KANSAS CITY. BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO DO ALL THAT, I FIGURED THERE HAD TO BE A WAY TO CUT THE MILEAGE, HENCE ASKING QUESTIONS I WENT TO THE ROCK ISLAND YARD AND ASKED SOME OF THE HOBOS THERE, AND FOUND OUT ABOUT RIDING THE KANSAS PACIFIC. THE U.P. WAS RUNNING THIS ROUTE INTO TOPEKA, SO I FOLLOWED DIRECTIONS TO THE KANSAS PACIFIC YARD AND FOUND

OUT THAT THE NEXT TRAIN EAST WASN'T SCHEDULED TO LEAVE UNTIL 6:00 PM. SO I SPENT THE DAY AT THE COLORADO ROCKIES STADIUM, AND AT THEIR BEER GARDEN DRINKING ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH, THEIR FLAGSHIP BREW, AT 4:30 PM I BEGAN THE LONG WALK BACK TO THE YARD AND BOARDED THE TRAIN RIDING EAST IN THE EMPTY REFRIGERATION COMPARTMENT OF A BOXCAR. IT ROLLED EAST PAST THE CAR SHOPS WITH ENOUGH EVENING SUN TO LIGHT UP THE ORIGINAL K.P. LOGO, COMPLETE WITH THE LONGHORN HEAD AND WIDELY STRETCHED HORNS, IN BETWEEN WHICH HUNG THE SHIELD OF THE UNION PACIFIC.

THE TRAIN ROLLS EAST AND PARALLELS THE WAGON TRAIN RUTS OF THE MORMON DRIVE FROM DENVER TO CHEYENNE WELLS, AND INTO WICHITA, SLOWLY ROLLING HILLS, BUT THE FREAKY THING ABOUT IT WAS AFTER LOOKING DOWN I SAW MOST OF THE TIES WERE JUST SPLINTERS. STILL IT WAS A SLOW LAZY ROLL INTO CHEYENNE WELLS AND THE CREW CHANGE, BY THE TIME I GOT THERE I WAS EXTREMELY HUNGRY AND WENT LOOKING FOR A GROCERY STORE, AN IGA WAS NEARBY, BUT I FOUND THEIR DUMPSTER INSTEAD. AND INSIDE WAS 3 RIPE WATERMELONS SO I GRABBED THEM AND HEADED BACK TO THE TRAIN AND RODE AN EMPTY LUMBER CAR SPITTING WATERMELON SEEDS ALL THE WAY INTO SALINA, THE PROBLEM WITH EATING THAT MUCH WATERMELON AND NOTHING ELSE IS THAT I ENDED UP WITH "THE HERSHEY SQUIRTS" FOR THE NEXT 3 DAYS, LIVE AND LEARN!

WHEN I FINALLY CAUGHT OUT IT WAS EVENING AND I RODE AN EMPTY BOXCAR INTO KANSAS CITY'S ARMOURDALE YARD, BEAT IT OFF THE TRAIN AND YARDS ON OVER TO THE KAW RIVER WHERE HOBO JUNGLES STILL EXIST. IT WAS HIGH TEMPERATURES OF 90* AND OVERNIGHT LOWS OF 80*, GREAT WEATHER FOR WASHING CLOTHES AND GREAT FOR ME SEEING I WAS STILL SUFFERING WITH ANOTHER BOUT OF THE "HERSHEY SQUIRTS", NEVER WILL I EAT THAT MUCH WATERMELON AGAIN!

ONE SUMMER I SPENT ROAMING AROUND THE DEEP SOUTH, AHHHHH, WHAT A PARADISE, EVERYTHING FROM MOBILE ALABAMA TO BILOXI MISSISSIPPI, I'VE WINTERED HERE MANY TIMES, MOST OF THE BLUE COLLAR FOLKS DOWN HERE ACCEPT HOBO'S AS A FACT OF LIFE, A TRUE CULTURAL GROUP, THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE BLUES. THAT WORD CALLS UP IMAGES OF SOME PERSON WAILING ABOUT HOW LIFE HAS TREATED THEM BADLY, AND MAKING DEALS WITH THE DEVIL, BUT MANY HOBO'S END UP WITH LIFE DOWN HERE ENJOYING THE WARMTH OF PEOPLE ACCEPTING HOBO'S AS THEY ARE, NO PREJUDICED IDEAS OR LIES. AND CERTAINLY NO " YEGGS" (ALSO CALLED PANHANDLERS), TRUE THERE ARE PANHANDLERS IN THE SOUTH BUT THEY DON'T "LEECH" OFF EACH OTHER LIKE THEY DO UP IN THE NORTH, HOBO'S ARE RECOGNIZED AS HONEST WORKING PEOPLE.

I CAME ACROSS THE MIDDLE NORTH OF LOUISIANA CATCHING THE MIDSouth FROM BOSSIER CITY THROUGH TO MONROE, WHERE I JUMPED OFF, (NEAR THE STOCKYARDS) THERE WAS A PALLET REBUILDING COMPANY THAT IS OWNED BY A FAMILY WHO ARE AMERICANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT (IF YOU WANT TO BE TRULY POLITICALLY CORRECT) WHO WILL EMPLOY ANY HOBO WHO ASKS THEM. I HAD BUILT UP SEVERAL YEARS OF COMING TO TOWN AND WORKING FOR THEM, THIS ALWAYS PISSED-OFF MANY OF THE WHITE POWER FOLKS IN TOWN, ALTHOUGH THEY DIDN'T DARE COME DOWN TO THE TRACKS WHICH BOARDED THE "BOTTOMS" (WHICH IS V.F.W.--VERY FEW WHITES)! THIS FAMILY ALWAYS TREATS "THEIR HOBO'S" (AS THEY LIKE TO SAY IT) AS FAMILY AND EVERY SATURDAY THEY WOULD SERVE BBQ'ED PULLED PORK, AND WOULD SING, OR PLAY THE BLUES UNTIL TO EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING.

IT WAS JUST LIKE COMING HOME TO A FAMILY YOU NEVER KNEW YOU HAD, THEY WOULD FEED US, AND WE WOULD ENTERTAIN WITH OUR ROAD STORIES, THERE'S NO WAY TO SEE THIS ON TV, OR HEAR IT ON THE RADIO. THEY WOULD LOOK FORWARD TO ANY HOBO COMING

TO TOWN, AND WOULD SEE US OFF TO CATCH OUR RESPECTIVE TRAINS, THIS TIME I LOADED UP MY PAY AND SEVERAL POUNDS OF BBQ'ED PULLED PORK, AND SPENT THE NEXT FEW WEEKS ROAMING ON THE MIDSOUTH, LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE, ILLINOIS CENTRAL GULF, CENTRAL RAILWAY OF GEORGIA, FRISCO, AND THE SOUTHERN TO ROLL ACROSS MISSISSIPPI, ALABAMA, AND GEORGIA. THE GREAT SOUTHERN FOREST IS STILL A PLEASANT RIDE, ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT WHEN IT'S COOLER, THE FOREST DARK, AND EVERY LIVING THING IS CALLING OUT, NOISES ABOUND FROM EVERY DIRECTION. I CAN IMAGINE SOME SCRIPT WRITER CREATING A THOUSAND STORIES TO BE TURNED INTO MOVIES FOR MGM, WARNER BROTHERS, OR PARAMOUNT (TO NAME A FEW)!

ANOTHER TIME I WAS IN RICHMOND VIRGINIA LOOKING TO CATCH OUT BACK TO MEMPHIS TENNESSEE, I WAS SITTING BEHIND THE GREYHOUND BUS STATION LOOKING AT THE C.S.X. ENGINE HOUSE. WATCHING AS A WESTBOUND WAS BEING MADE UP, SEVERAL OF THE CARS WERE FROM WESTERN RAILROADS AND I SAW 6 LOCOMOTIVES BEING ADDED, THE FRONT 2 WERE FROM UNION PACIFIC KNOWING THAT THIS WOULD BE GOING THROUGH TO MEMPHIS I QUICKLY SPIED THE CAR I WANTED TO RIDE, THEN LOCKED MY GEAR IN A LOCKER IN THE BUS STATION SO I WOULDN'T LOOK LIKE A TRAIN RIDER. I MUST HAVE WAITED 5 MORE HOURS UNTIL I SAW THE CREW BEING ROLLED TO THE TRAIN, IT WAS THEN THAT I GOT MY GEAR OUT OF THE LOCKER AND GOT ONBOARD. THIS TRAIN ROLLED THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS ALL NIGHT, WHEELS SQUEALING, ECHOING THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS AND CANYONS, EARLY IN THE MORNING WE CROSSED THE RIVER AT HARPER'S FERRY. I WAS TOLD BY AN OLD-TIME HOBO THAT THERE WAS A HOBO JUNGLE AT THE BRIDGE CROSSING, AND THERE IS ANOTHER IN THE RAILROAD Y.M.C.A. SOMEWHERE IN THE BASEMENT.

YOU CAN'T JUNGLE AT THE BRIDGE ANYMORE BECAUSE PART OF THE BRIDGE IS A BICYCLE TRAIL, BUT THE "Y" STILL HAS A BASEMENT AREA THAT HAS BEDS AND PLACES WHERE THE OLD-TIMERS SIGNED THEIR MONIKERS. I'VE STOPPED AND LOOKED THIS PLACE OVER, THERE IS A TUNNEL FROM THE "Y" THAT RUNS UNDERGROUND TO

THE UNDERSIDE OF THE BRIDGE WHERE THE OLD HOBOS USED TO CAMP AND CATCH OUT. ON THIS TRIP HOWEVER WE CONTINUED WEST AND STOPPED FOR OUR CREW CHANGE AT OAK RIDGE TENNESSEE NEXT TO THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS LAB, DAMN, I THOUGHT I WAS TO BE ARRESTED AND GO AWAY FOR A LONG TIME. THE TRAIN STAYED HERE FOR 6 HOURS AND AS THE SUN WAS RISING WE PULLED OUT, FOR A MINUTE I SWEAR I SAW THE F-117 STEALTH FIGHTER AT AN AIRFIELD PARALLELING THE TRACKS, AS WE ROLLED TOWARDS KNOXVILLE I KEPT WAITING FOR THE FIGHTERS TO SWOOP IN AND BOMB THE TRAIN. WE KEPT ROLLING WEST AND FINALLY MADE IT TO CHATTANOOGA I DECIDED TO GET OFF AND TAKE A REST, AFTER THAT STOP IN OAK RIDGE I NEEDED TO GET A QUART OR 2 OF MOONSHINE TO SETTLE MY NERVES. PLUS CAMP AND FISH ON THE TENNESSEE RIVER FOR A WHILE, IT WAS WHILE CAMPING UNDER THE RIVER BRIDGE THAT I NOTICED THE ACTIVITY, THE TRAIN WOULD STOP BEFORE CROSSING THE BRIDGE.

SO IT LOOKED LIKE I HAD AN EASY CATCH HERE, I BOARDED AN INTERMODAL WHICH ROLLED OUT GOING TO NASHVILLE, BUT AS OPPOSED TO GOING INTO THE YARD ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF TOWN, IT INSTEAD CHANGED CREWS DOWNTOWN AT A NIGHTCLUB I USED TO DO JANITORIAL WORK AT CALLED "THE CANNERY." WE CONTINUED TO ROLL WEST AND AS WE PASSED BY THE NIGHTCLUB I LISTENED AS MERLE HAGGARD WAS PLAYING AN OUTDOOR CONCERT, "THE HAG" SERENADED ME OUT OF TOWN WHICH IS ONLY RIGHT SEEING AS MERLE HAGGARD (IN HIS YOUNGER YEARS) WAS ALSO A HOBO! WELL THIS WAS TURNING OUT TO BE A GREAT RIDE FOR ME AS NO-ONE COULD HAVE SET IT UP THIS GOOD, THIS LEFT ME TO DOZE THROUGH THE RIDE WEST, AND THE CREW CHANGE IN BRUCETON. AS WE PULLED INTO MEMPHIS I GOT OFF THE TRAIN AND CAUGHT A CITY BUS AND WENT TO BEAL STREET TO THE BLUE DALIA LOUNGE, THE SAME LOUNGE THAT AUSTIN JOHN USED TO SING ABOUT, AND WHO SHOULD I RUN INTO BUT MERLE HAGGARD WHO PROMPTLY ASKED "DIDN'T I SEE YOU RIDING ON A TRAIN LAST NIGHT IN NASHVILLE?" I SPENT THE REST OF THAT NIGHT TRADING ROAD STORIES WITH HIM HOBO TO HOBO, AND I'LL REMEMBER THAT NIGHT AS LONG AS I LIVE, WHAT A MEMORY!

ONE YEAR AFTER THE NATIONAL HOBO CONVENTION I MADE MY WAY UP TO MINNEAPOLIS LOOKING TO TAKE THE "BACK DOOR" TO THE HIGHLINE. THIS COMPRISES HEADING TO THE SOO/CP BROOKLYN YARD TO CATCH UP 2 DIVISION POINTS TO THE SOUTH SIDE OF MINOT N.D. WHERE THE TRAIN SETS OFF CARS. AND THEN GOING TO THE ABANDONED WAREHOUSES TO CATCH THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN WHEN IT STOPS TO CHANGE CREWS AT THE AMTRAK STATION. BUT THIS TIME I STOPPED TO VISIT WITH HOBO'S WHO HAD LEFT THE CONVENTION TO HEAD BACK TO THEIR RESPECTIVE HOMES. I VISITED WITH QUEEN MINNEAPOLIS JEWEL WHO HAD ROD SYKORA AT HER HOUSE, HE HAD AGREED TO RIDE THE HIGHLINE WITH THE COLLINWOOD KID, BUT AT THE LAST MINUTE BACKED OUT. I OVERHEARD THE PHONE CALL AND VOLUNTEERED TO TAKE ROD'S PLACE ON THIS TRIP AND TALKED WITH COLLINWOOD, HE ASKED ME TO COME BACK INTO CHICAGO BUT I TOLD HIM I'M HEADING WEST AND GOING TO CHICAGO WOULD MEAN I'D HAVE TO BACKTRACK WHICH I WASN'T INCLINED TO DO. I SAID IF HE WOULD MEET ME AT LA CROSSE I WOULD RIDE WITH HIM TO THE HIGHLINE, FOR ME IT WAS AN EASY CATCH BACK TO LA CROSSE ON B.N. BUT IT ALSO MEANT CAMPING OUT WITH THE WISCONSIN MOSQUITOS, I ENDURED 2 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF THE WISCONSIN NATIONAL AIR FORCE, THEY HAD A VORACIOUS APPETITE, COLLINWOOD SHOWED UP ON THE THIRD DAY AT THE AMTRAK DEPOT, EVIDENTLY HE HAD HIS OWN TROUBLE GETTING TO LA CROSSE TOO. IF YOU ASK HIM HE'LL TELL YOU HIS OWN TALE OF HOW HE GOT THERE, ANYWAY WE IMMEDIATELY WENT OVER TO "GRAND JUNCTION" WHICH IS UNDER A CITY BRIDGE, AND WHERE EVERYONE GOING WEST CATCHES B.N. (NOW B.N.S.F.) AND WAITED ON AN INTERMODAL.

I TOLD HIM IT WAS BETTER TO CATCH THE TRAIN FROM HERE AND RIDE IT STRAIGHT THRU NORTHTOWN, WHICH WE THEN ACCOMPLISHED GOING THRU AFTER SUNSET. WE ROLLED THRU THE NIGHT GOING THRU FARGO AND UP TO MINOT, WE STOPPED OUTSIDE OF THE YARD WAITING FOR A TRAIN TO ROLL BY AFTER

WHICH WE ROLLED INTO MINOT FOR THE CREW CHANGE AT THE AMTRAK STATION. THEN WE ROLLED FURTHER WEST CROSSING WESTERN NORTH DAKOTA AND EASTERN MONTANA, FLAT AND BORING ALL THE WAY INTO GLASGOW, WE HAD A 5 HOUR WAIT HERE BECAUSE THE ONLY MOTEL IS IN SHELBY. SO I SPENT AN HOUR LOOKING FOR WATER SEEING WE RAN OUT DURING THE HOTTEST TIME OF THE DAY, WE THEN ROLLED FURTHER WEST HEADING OUT FOR HAVRE. THE YARD HERE IS ONLY 4 MILES FROM THE CANADIAN BORDER, WE SAW MORE BORDER PATROL THAN ANYONE ELSE, WE STASHED OUR GEAR AND WENT LOOKING FOR A STORE TO "GRUB-UP" AND THEN WALKED BACK TO THE YARD. IT WAS THEN THAT WE CAME ACROSS MINNEAPOLIS JEWELS MONIKER AND HER "LOVE THOSE HOBO MEN" POEM. SHE WROTE THIS ON THE WALL OF A BUSINESS WHICH WAS FACING THE YARD BACK WHEN SHE AND NEW YORK RON RODE THE HIGHLINE TOGETHER.

WE THEN CAUGHT A TRAIN OUT OF HAVRE STRAIGHT THRU SHELBY INTO WHITEFISH, COLLINWOOD WANTED TO CATCH A TRAIN DOWN TO GREAT FALLS BUT WE HAD TO GET INTO WHITEFISH FIRST. IT'S THERE THAT THE TRAIN TO GREAT FALLS IS MADE UP, AFTER MAKING IT TO WHITEFISH WE LEARNED THAT THE GREAT FALLS TRAIN HAD ALREADY LEFT SO WE PITCHED CAMP ON THE R.I.P. TRACK. AND WAITED UNTIL THE NEXT DAY, WE CAUGHT THE FIRST THING SMOKING BACK EAST ONLY TO FIND OUT THAT OUR TRAIN WAS A LOCAL DROPPING OFF CARS AND HEADING FURTHER EAST. SO WE BAILED HERE AND WAITED FOR THE GREAT FALLS TRAIN TO CATCH UP WITH US, COLLINWOOD WANTED TO GO DUMPSTER DIVING SO WE WENT ACROSS THE STREET TO THE LOCAL IGA AND WHILE I WAS IN THE DUMPSTER THE STORE MANAGER CAME OUT AND RAN US OFF, BUT I WAS DETERMINED AND WENT BACK. WE ENDED UP GETTING APPLES, 3 SHEET CAKES, AND 137 CANS OF DISCARDED SODA. WE COULDN'T CARRY ALL THAT "BOOTY" ON THE TRAIN SO WE STACKED MOST OF IT UP AT THE CATCH-OUT SPOT FOR THE NEXT HOBO THAT MIGHT COME THRU.

COLLINWOOD AND I CAUGHT THE GREAT FALLS TRAIN AND MADE A SWIFT RUN DOWN, HE THEN WENT TO RENT-A-WRECK AND LEASED A CAR TO DRIVE TO DEER LODGE. THERE IS A STATE PRISON THERE AND RON WAS DOING TIME THERE, AND WE WENT THERE TO VISIT WITH HIM, WHEN WE GOT THERE WE FOUND OUT THAT RON WAS IN THE SHU (THE JAIL WITHIN THE PRISON) SO THAT LEFT US WITH A LONG RIDE BACK TO HELENA. COLLINWOOD WANTED TO SEE GOD'S LOVE, THE FAMOUS MISSION THAT MANY HOBO'S HAD ALWAYS MENTIONED, WE STAYED OVERNIGHT THERE AND HEADED BACK TO GREAT FALLS THE NEXT DAY TO TURN THE CAR BACK IN, AND CATCH THE WHITEFISH TRAIN. WE FOUND OUT THAT THE TRAIN HAD ALREADY LEFT AND WE HAD TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT DAY. SO WE CAMPED AT THE NORTH END AND SLEPT UNTIL MORNING, WE THEN CAUGHT THE TRAIN AND ROLLED FAST INTO WHITEFISH, I WAS ALL FOR CATCHING OUT AGAIN BUT COLLINWOOD WANTED TO GO SIGHTSEEING. HE WANTED TO FIND A PLACE CALLED ROCKY MOUNTAIN PIZZA THAT AD MAN SAID WAS THERE.

BUT NO SUCH LUCK, EVIDENTLY THE BUSINESS WAS NO LONGER IN OPERATION, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP US FROM LOOKING AROUND TOWN. WHITEFISH HAD GONE FROM A SMALL TOWN DIVISION POINT TO "YUPPIEVILLE" AND IT MADE ME UNCOMFORTABLE SO WE WENT THE PASSENGER STATION. AMTRAK IS HOUSED IN THE OLD GREAT NORTHERN STATION WHICH RESEMBLES AN ISAAC WALTON LODGE, WE SPENT THE AFTERNOON IN THAT STATION AND TALKED TO GYPSY MOON ON THE PHONE. WHEN A TRAIN PULLED UP OUTSIDE, AND A BOXCAR WAS SITTING PARALLEL TO THE DOOR, THAT ONLY LEFT A COUPLE THINGS TO DO, HANG UP THE PHONE, PICK UP OUR GEAR, AND GET ONBOARD, WE CLIMBED ON THE TRAIN RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE AMTRAK AGENT WHO JUST STARED AT US UNBELIEVABLY. WE RODE THRU FLATHEAD TUNNEL WHICH IS 5 MILES LONG, AND HAS A WALL MOUNTED LIGHT EVERY 1/4 MILE, AND WE CAME OUT THE OTHER END DOING 60 MILES AN HOUR. MAKING IT TO GLENDIVE WHICH IS AT THE TOP OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE. NOW WE WOULD REALLY ROLL DOWN THE MOUNTAINS WHEELS SCREECHING,

WIND BLOWING, AND BRAKES BURNING, ALL THE WAY INTO PUGET SOUND WHERE THE TRAIN BROKE UP, PART OF IT GOING UP TO ASTORIA. WELL I DECIDED TO BED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT SO I CRAWLED UP ON A RAILROAD ABUTMENT AND ROLLED OUT, COLLINWOOD WANTED ME TO LOOK AT A PLACE HE DISCOVERED ON THE HILLSIDE. SO I TOLD HIM "MAMA DIDN'T RAISE ME TO BE A MOUNTAIN GOAT" AND CONVINCED HIM TO GET ON THE ABUTMENT WITH ME LETTING HIM KNOW THAT PUGET SOUND HAS HEAVY FOG THAT ROLLS IN OVERNIGHT, ADD TO THAT IT RAINS HEAVILY.

I HAD A WATERPROOF EXTREME COLD SLEEPING BAG BUT COLLINWOOD DIDN'T, AS HE ROLLED OUT HE ASKED "WHAT IF I ROLL OFF OVERNIGHT?", TO WHICH I REPLIED " WELL YOU'LL DO A FACE PLANT, BUT YOU'LL ONLY FALL 15 FEET." BY MORNING WE WOKE TO THE GROUND UNDER THE BRIDGE DRY AND THE GROUND ON THE HILLSIDE SOAKING WET, WE CAUGHT A COMMUTER BUS TO SEATTLE. COLLINWOOD CALLED A YOUNG MAN HE HAD BEEN TALKING TO ON THE INTERNET, HE MET US AT INTERBAY YARD AND THE 2 OF US EXPLAINED SOME OF THE PLEASURES AND HAZARDS OF TRAIN-RIDING. THEN WE CAUGHT A SOUTHBOUND, OR AT LEAST WE THOUGHT IT WAS, BUT IT BROKE UP SOUTH OF DOWNTOWN SEATTLE, SON-OF-A-BI@#\$%&. WE ENDED UP WAITING MOST OF THE AFTERNOON UNTIL ANOTHER TRAIN STOPPED, SO THE 3 OF US BOARDED AND RODE SOUTH, OUR TRAIN STOPPED IN EVERETT, CONTINUED TO KELSO, AND FINALLY MADE IT INTO VANCOUVER. THERE COLLINWOOD LEFT THE KID AND TOLD ME HE WANTED TO CATCH BACK ON THE U.P, THERE IS A SIDING THAT U.P. PARKS TRAINS OVERNIGHT, WE HEADED OVER THERE TO WAIT FOR THE TRAIN TO PULL THE NEXT DAY, WE WERE AWOKE IN THE NIGHT BY SHOWERS OF GRAIN BEING THROWN ON US, TURNS OUT THERE WERE TEENAGER'S ON TOP OF THE TRAIN DIGGING IN THE CORN AND PITCHING IT OVER THE SIDE.

COLLINWOOD HAD A RADIO SCANNER WITH HIM SO I BORROWED IT AND CLIMBED UP THE SIDE IMPERSONATING A RAILROAD POLICE

OFFICER. THE KIDS WERE SCARED SHITLESS AND TOOK OFF RUNNING DOWN THE TOP OF ALL THE CARS AWAY FROM US, BY THE NEXT DAY THE TRAIN PULLED BUT ONLY WENT 150 FEET AND STOPPED. COLLINWOOD WALKED UP THE TRAIN TO SEE WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED, HE FOUND A U.P. EMPLOYEE IN A TRUCK WHO TOLD HIM THAT A LOCAL PERSON TRIED TO BEAT THE TRAIN BUT WASN'T THAT LUCKY, WHEN ASKED IF THE GUY WAS ALRIGHT HE WAS TOLD "HE'S NOT DEAD, BUT HE PROBABLY HAS A GOOD CASE OF THE BROWN PANTS DISEASE"! COLLINWOOD AND I MADE IT TO HERMISTON WHERE U.P. SHUT DOWN, THE RAILROAD WAS ON STRIKE, BUT AMTRAK WAS STILL RUNNING, COLLINWOOD BOUGHT HIMSELF A TICKET BECAUSE HE HAD TO GET BACK TO WORK AT THE CLEVELAND VA. HE LEFT ME WITH THE X-TRA \$\$\$ IN HIS POCKET, AND LEFT THAT AFTERNOON, 16 HOURS LATER THE STRIKE WAS SETTLED AND I WAS ROLLING OUT OF HERMISTON THRU LA GRANDE, AND INTO POCATELLO, THERE I GOT A LOCAL INTO OGDEN UTAH, KNOWN TO HOBO'S AS " OGGY DOG".

I'D LIKE TO SAY THIS: IN ALL THE YEARS THAT I TRAVELED THE RAILS I NEVER CONTEMPLATED THE DEEPER REASON WHY I LIVED THIS LIFE, I CAME INTO THIS WORLD A SINGLE CHILD TO A SINGLE MOTHER. AND A FAMILY OF HOBO'S WHO HAD A LOVE OF LIFE, LOVE OF TRAVELING, AND A LOVE OF ADVENTURE, WHEN I JOINED THE ARMY I JOINED A FAMILY WHO HAD A LOVE OF LIFE, LOVE OF TRAVELING, AND A LOVE OF ADVENTURE. WHEN I LEFT THE ARMY I TRIED TO LIVE LIKE A NORMAL CITIZEN BUT FOUND I COULDN'T LIVE THAT WAY, SO I RETURNED THE HOBO LIFE.

HOBO'S AND MILITARY VETERANS ARE THE SAME, BOTH LOVE LIFE, TRAVELING, AND ADVENTURE, AND WE ARE A FAMILY, NOT BOUND BY BLOOD, BUT BY A COMMONALITY THAT IS A DEEP PART OF US. SUCH A DEEP PART THAT SOCIETY HAS A HARD TIME TRYING TO UNDERSTAND US, OFFERING THE QUOTE "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE", OR TRYING TO PSYCHOANALYZE US, BUT IT'S MUCH EASIER THAN ALL THAT---JUST ACCEPT US.

HOPEFULLY THIS WILL GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF MY DAYS HOBOING, IF NOT THEN THE BEST I CAN COME UP WITH IS A POEM OR TWO THAT I WROTE A FEW YEARS AGO.

MAKING A NIGHT TIME RUN

MAKING A NIGHT TIME RUN, THE MAINLINE IS OH SO CLEAR, WITH NO MORE RED BLOCK LIGHTS, OR OTHER TRAINS TO HEAR.

THE RAILS ARE SINGING LOUD, THE WHEELS THEY LOVE TO WHINE, THE WIND IN MY FACE IS CRISP AND CLEAR, IT'S ME, THE TRAIN, AND TIME.

I DON'T CARE WHICH LINE I'M RIDING, I DON'T CARE WHICH WAY I GO, THE NIGHT TIME IS CLEAR, STARS SHINING, IT MAKES MY GREASY BLOOD FLOW.

FOR SOME NIGHT RIDING IS OLD NEWS, FOR ME IT'S REALLY FUN, TO EXERCISE MY FREEDOM, TO MAKE A NIGHT TIME RUN.

WHAT IS A HOBO

I'VE OFTEN BEEN ASKED WHAT IS A HOBO, TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION WILL TAKE A WHILE.

A HOBO IS THE EPITOME OF EVERY EXPERIENCE EVER DREAMED. NO BOSS TO ANSWER TO, THE HOBO IS NOT RULED BY A CALENDAR, OR TIME CLOCK.

THE REGIMENTED LIFE FORCED ON OTHERS, CANNOT BE FORCED ON HIM, NO MAN RUNS HIM, NO MAN OWNS HIM.

HE'S A WANDERING WIND, A TRAVELING SPIRIT, A GYPSY STAR, A WANDERING EAGLE.

HE TRAVELS ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE, AND TRAVELS FROM HOME TO HOME. HIS WAY OF TRAVEL IS ANY WAY HE CHOOSES, TRAIN, CAR, HITCHHIKING, MOTORCYCLE, BICYCLE.

HE'S FOND OF SAYING YESTERDAY HAS GONE BY, TOMORROW HASN'T GOT HERE YET.

ALL I CAN DO IS LIVE THIS DAY, THIS VERY MOMENT, AND CELEBRATE LIFE.

HE'S THE WORKING STIFF'S DREAM OF WHAT HE WANTS TO BE, AND THE WORKING STIFFS DREAM IS THE HOBO'S REALITY.

SO WHAT IS A HOBO?, A HOBO IS THE SPIRIT INSIDE EVERY ONE OF US THAT DARES TO DREAM, AND LIVE THAT DREAM COMPLETELY!

TRY TO TAKE THESE FEW PAGES AS A TESTAMENT OF MY TIMES, AND IF THEY INCISE YOU TO WANDER IN THIS FASHION PACK UP A BEDROLL, GO TO A TRAIN YARD, AND LISTEN FOR A TRAIN, AND GO OUT TO ENJOY AMERICA IN A WAY THAT ONLY RAILROADERS, HOBOES, AND EAGLES CAN SEE IT, AS FOR ME NO REGRETS!

THE TEXAS MADMAN

GRAND DUKE OF THE HOBO'S

GLOSSARY

THIS GLOSSARY CONTAINS WORDS AND PHRASES THAT ARE USED IN THIS BOOK, I TRY TO EXPLAIN THINGS WITHOUT USING HOBO TERMS BECAUSE THE GENERAL PUBLIC DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THEIR MEANING. BUT AFTER READING THIS OVER AND OVER I REALIZE THAT I FALL BACK INTO MY OLD HOBO WAYS OF EXPLANATION AND STORYTELLING, THUS I MUST INCLUDE THIS GLOSSARY. SOME WORDS USED IN THE TEXT ARE SUBJECTS IN THE STORIES, BUT OTHERS..... WELL I'LL LET YOU BE THE JUDGE!

BACK OF THE YARDS - AN AREA FOR LIVESTOCK TRUCK PARKING THAT IS BEHIND THE CHICAGO STOCKYARDS, THIS IS ALSO THE LOCATION OF A TRAIN YARD FORMERLY THE CONRAIL, NOW OPERATED BY NORFOLK & SOUTHERN.

BOOTY - ANY ITEM THAT IS COLLECTED FOR IMMEDIATE, OR FUTURE USE.

BOTTOMS - OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE RIVER BOTTOMS, BUT ALSO CAN REFER TO WETLANDS AREAS, BLUE COLLAR PEOPLE OFTEN LIVE IN "BOTTOMS" AREAS FOR ECONOMIC REASONS.

BULL - USUALLY USED AS A TERM FOR RAILROAD POLICE, BUT CAN BE REFERRED TO ANY POLICE AGENCY, DURING THE YEARS OF 1900 TO 1950

MANY POLICE AGENCIES EMPLOYED A DOG DEPARTMENT. MOST COMMON WAS THE ENGLISH BULLDOG EMPLOYED AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL TOOL FOR INTIMIDATION, THIS NAME WAS GIVEN TO THE RAILROAD POLICE BECAUSE OF THEIR "BULLDOG" AND/OR "BULLY" STYLE ATTITUDE WHEN DEALING WITH HOBO'S.

CATCH-OUT - REFERRING TO CATCHING A FREIGHT TRAIN AND LEAVING TOWN, A VARIATION OF THIS IS "CATCH THE FIRST THING SMOKING" WHICH MEANS LEAVING TOWN IN A HURRY.

CAUGHT-THE-WESTBOUND - CATCHING THE WESTBOUND MEANS DYING, BUT HOBO'S DON'T BELIEVE THAT THEIR NUMBER ACTUALLY DIE, THEY ARE JUST RIDING THE ULTIMATE TRAIN TO PARADISE.

DRAGGING HIM DOWN - A TERM USED FOR CAUSING UNDUE STRESS AND/OR HARDSHIP.

DRY COUNTY - A COUNTY THAT HAS VOTED TO RESTRICT THE SALE OF HARD LIQUOR, OR BEER THAT IS STRONGER THAN 3.2 %.

DUMPSTER DIVING - EXTRACTING ITEMS THROWN AWAY IN A DUMPSTER, BUT MOST OFTEN FOOD OR CANNED GOODS.

GANDYDANCER CAMP CAR - IN THE EARLY YEARS OF TRACK MAINTENANCE HAND TOOLS WERE IN CONSTANT USE, THE MOST COMMON WAS THE SHOVEL, THE GANDY SHOVEL COMPANY OF CHICAGO ILLINOIS WAS CONTRACTED TO MANUFACTURE SHOVELS FOR TRACK MAINTENANCE USE. THE SHOVEL WAS WEDGED UNDER A RAIL, OR TIE AND THE EMPLOYEE WOULD STAND ON THE HANDLE AND RAISE THE RAIL OR TIE SO THAT GRAVEL COULD BE USED TO LEVEL THE ROAD BED. THE GANDYDANCER CAMP CAR WAS A BOXCAR WITH BUNKS SPACED 18 INCHES APART FOR THE GANDYDANCER'S TO SLEEP IN.

GUM SHOE - REFERRING TO A POLICE DETECTIVE OR POLICE IN GENERAL, TO PROTECT THE FEET OF POLICE WHO MIGHT BE ON THEIR FEET UP TO 10-12 HOURS A DAY THEIR SHOES WOULD HAVE SOLES MADE OF A SOFT GUM.

HIGHLINE - OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE GREAT NORTHERN WHOSE MAINLINE IS CLOSEST TO THE CANADIAN BORDER, IT ALSO REFERS TO AN ELEVATED RAIL THAT RUNS ACROSS WESTERN KANSAS CITY WHERE TRAINS ARE TRANSFERRED FROM ONE RAILROAD TO ANOTHER.

HITTING THE ROAD - LEAVING AN AREA.

HOBO - REFERRING TO A PERSON WHO TRAVELS THE COUNTRY USING FREIGHT TRAINS FOR CROSS COUNTRY TRANSPORTATION, ONE EXPLANATION STATES THAT HOBO'S WERE SO NAMED BECAUSE THEY CARRIED A HOE TO DO FARM OR GARDEN LABOR. BUT CONSIDER THE DAYS THAT HOBO'S WERE PREVALENT THERE WAS ECONOMIC HARDSHIP IN OUR COUNTRY, IMPLEMENTS SUCH AS HOE'S WERE TOO EXPENSIVE FOR HOBO'S TO BUY. ESPECIALLY WHEN WAGES WERE 40¢ A DAY, MORE REALISTICALLY HOBO'S CARRIED A LONG HANDLE, MOST IMPLEMENTS HAD SHORT HANDLES WHICH EXPLAINS THE TERM "BACK BREAKING WORK"! THE FALLACY OF THE STICK HOBO'S CARRIED WAS THE LONG HANDLE INSERTED INTO THE IMPLEMENT TO ACCOMPLISH A DAY'S WORK. THE OTHER EXPLANATION OF THE WORD HOBO COMES FROM AN AREA IN NEW YORK CITY WHERE HOBO'S WOULD HANGOUT, A PLACE FOR CHEAP HOUSING, AND AVAILABLE WORK LOCATED AT THE INTERSECTION OF HOUSTON AND BOWERY STREETS. A FINAL EXPLANATION IS THAT THE WORD WAS GRANTED BY A CATHOLIC PRIEST IN CHICAGO WHO AIDED THE MANY POOR, THE PRIEST COULD DISCERN BETWEEN WHO ACTUALLY WANTED TO WORK, AND WHO WANTED JUST A HANDOUT. THE PRIEST CALLED THEM HOMO BONUS, THE TRANSLATION OF THIS LATIN PHRASE MEANS **GOOD MAN!**

HONEY HOLE - THE PIT UNDER AN OUTDOOR TOILET INTO WHICH HUMAN DEFECATION IS DEPOSITED, THE REFERENCE "HONEY HOLE" IS A JOKE ON THE SMELL THAT EMANATES FROM THE PIT.

ITCHY FEET - A PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION THAT CAUSES A PERSON TO DESIRE TO TRAVEL, OR SEEK OUT AN EVERY DAY ADVENTURE.

KNOCKED UP - REFERRING TO BEING PREGNANT.

LEECH - REFERRING TO A PERSON WHO HAS NO DESIRE TO MAINTAIN THEMSELVES INDEPENDENTLY, AND "BUMS" OFF OF FRIENDS, THIS CAN ALSO BE CALLED A "JUNGLE BUZZARD"!

MONIKER - A PICTORIAL DRAWING THAT ACCOMPANIES A HOBO'S ROAD NAME GIVING A TRADEMARK FOR THE HOBO.

OFF THE GRID - REFERRING TO LIFE WITHOUT MODERN CONVENIENCES.

OUT HOUSE - OUTDOOR PLUMBING.

PANHANDLERS - PEOPLE WHO WOULD BEG FOR MONEY, OFTEN DURING THE DEPRESSION YEARS THESE PEOPLE WOULD BE SO FILTHY THAT NO ONE WOULD WANT TO GET NEAR THEM. THEY WOULD EMPLOY A PAN WITH A LONG HANDLE TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO DEPOSIT MONEY, OR CHANGE.

POTTERS FIELD - A LOCATION OF A CEMETERY WHERE UNKNOWN PEOPLE WHO DIE ARE BURIED.

ROAD NAME - A NAME THAT IS USED BY THE HOBO THAT BEST DESCRIBES THEIR PERSONALITY.

SIDETRACKED - A RAILROAD TERM USED FOR BEING SET ON A STORAGE TRACK, BUT ALSO REFERS TO SOMEONE WHO HAS TO LEAVE THE RAILS FOR AWHILE.

SNIPPETS - REFERRING TO SMALL PIECES.

TOWN CLOWN - NORMALLY REFERRING TO A POLICE OFFICER WHO ACTS IRRATIONALLY, BUT IS DRESSED UP AS IF GOING TO A PARADE OR PUBLIC EVENT.

TRAMP GOLD - REFERRING TO ANY SEMI-PRECIOUS METAL THAT IS COLLECTED FOR RECYCLING, OR SELLING FOR MONEY THAT IS NOT PRESENT IN THE HOBO'S POCKET.

YEGGS - AN OLD TERM USED TO DESCRIBE A SHIFTLESS PERSON, OR A CROOK.

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